

Second commitment period remains elusive

Durban, 5 Dec (Chee Yoke Ling and Xu Chengcheng) – At the end of the first week of the Durban climate negotiations, Parties to the Kyoto Protocol were presented with four options by the Chair of the AWG-KP with regard to the second commitment period of greenhouse gas emission reductions under the Kyoto Protocol. The first commitment period will end in 2012.

The first option is the adoption of a second commitment period (amendment to Annex B) and its provisional application, in the event that a fully ratified second commitment period is not in force by the end of the first commitment period.

The second option is a two-stage process: a decision in Durban ensuring immediate continuity, and a package of amendments that could be ratified as a second stage possibly based on progress under the Convention.

The third option is a decision of the CMP with no amendment to the Kyoto Protocol.

The fourth option is a declaration, e.g. unilateral declarations by Parties.

At the stock taking session on 3 December Adrian Macey, Chair of the AWG-KP, said that Parties have engaged in intensive work and that he had undertaken informal consultations on issues and options on QELROs, on numbers, form and length of the commitment period, and issues and options on mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol. He said it was not a discussion of text but looking at clusters of issues as a whole to crystallise the issues.

Macey said that on LULUCF, the text is close to clean options.

On the second commitment period (CP), that is of high interest he said, and we had conversations between non-Annex 1 Parties and those Annex 1 Parties that are open to second CP. He said there was considerable amount of common ground.

He said that the challenge is ratification and that to do so before 2013 is not feasible. A provisional application does not seem possible either.

[At the contact group meeting before the stock take, Macey said that most Parties seem to agree that Durban may not achieve a fully ratified amendment to the Kyoto Protocol amendment (for the second commitment period) by 2013.]

He then set out the other 3 options: a 2-stage process of a decision with a package of amendments, perhaps ratifiable in the context of progress under Convention; a decision; and a declaration such as a unilateral declaration by Parties.

On the finalisation and ambition of QELROs he said there is divergence. Some Parties consider they will need more time. Some imply that in Durban there may be targets but there are Parties who say that rules have to be determined first.

On ambition, Macey said that the key concern is to avoid locking in low ambitions.

On the big picture of the second CP he said that a deal is achievable but not in isolation. He said that we are exploring options as far as possible. Parties have to consider options outside their comfort zone. Parties have made it clear that they will not decide on the second CP unless there is a package.

At the contact group meeting before the stock take session, Macey reported on the informal consultations, stating that Annex I Parties said the first option is not possible for them because of their constitutions or parliamentary process. Non-Annex 1 Parties questioned this but Annex 1 Parties reiterated that this is not an option.

Macey said that on the 3rd and 4th options that do not involve amendment to the Protocol and ratification, many Parties did not think this is workable and think that full ratification is essential.

Below are some of the statements made at the contact group on this issue.

Brazil on behalf the Group of 77 and China supported a fully ratified amendment to Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol, with commitments of Annex 1 Parties under the second CP expressed in QELROs in single numbers.

Cuba associated with Brazil, and stressed the establishment of the second CP to avoid the dangerous gap, and that is necessary for developed countries to raise their ambition.

Saint Lucia, on behalf of AOSIS also supported a fully ratified amendment, QELROs that should be expressed in single numbers and also said that a 5-year second CP is appropriate.

It further said that a number of Annex 1 Parties have to do provisional application and that there is need to clarify the distinction between 'impossible' and 'difficult', as some Annex 1 Parties said it is difficult for them to do, but not impossible.

It said that a decision as the only outcome or a declaration without a formal amendment to the Kyoto Protocol is not an outcome that AOSIS can support.

EU said it is important to ensure there is no gap between the first and second commitment periods.

The **Philippines** associated with Brazil and expressed disappointment that after 5 years of negotiations, some Parties are supporting decisions or unilateral declarations as an outcome of Durban, and this is not acceptable to the Philippines. It said that Durban needs a strong political signal for the second commitment period.

New Zealand said the second CP is essential to an outcome in Durban, and supported the area of commonality identified in the Chair's report, and said it is important to move from idealism to realism.

Ecuador said that the second CP is critical, and the decision needs to be made before the Ministers arrive. It does not endorse the proposal of a declaration which will move us back and it fully supports the ratification of a Kyoto Protocol amendment.

Benin said we need to finalize the issue of QELROs which is important to ensure there is no gap between the first and second CP, and that Parties need to adopt an agreement that can ensure such continuity.