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Parties to Propose Ideas for Streamlining Negotiating Text

Geneva, 11 February (Meena Raman) – Parties at the Geneva climate change meeting under the UNFCCC's Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), were tasked with proposing ideas on how to 'streamline' the negotiating text for the new climate agreement to be concluded in Paris in December this year.

Since the meeting began on Sunday, 8 February Parties have been making proposals for addition to the elements text which was annexed to the decision adopted in Lima (in decision 1/CP.20). On the afternoon of Tuesday, 10 February, the ADP Co-chairs, Daniel Reifsnyder (the United States) and Ahmed Djoghlaif (Algeria) convened the contact group to discuss the issue of 'streamlining'.

Confusion reigned in the contact group when Reifsnyder began by asking Parties to take the elements text from Lima and provide thoughts on ways to streamline it, adding that he was not asking Parties to streamline the new ideas (presented during the Geneva session). He said further that the views of Parties will be recorded in a separate document that would be useful as Parties prepare for negotiations in the June session of the ADP, to be held in Bonn, Germany.

He added further that if some Parties are not able to do this 'this afternoon', there will be other opportunities to do so in June, saying that 'this is the beginning of streamlining'. He also wanted Parties to consider what aspects belong to the Paris agreement and what can be in the decisions of the Conference of Parties (COP) and invited Parties to look at section C of the text on 'general/objective'.

Following the interventions by various Parties, from both developing and developed countries, it was agreed that the text that would be looked at on how streamlining can be done should be the text from Geneva and not Lima. Parties also stressed the need for the establishment of clear ground rules for the

streamlining exercise that would be discussed further on Wednesday, 11 February.

When the contact group session began afternoon of 10 February, **Tuvalu**, speaking for the **Least Developed Countries (LDC)**, said that Parties were 'entering a new realm of the process' and there is a 'need for further clarity on the rules of the game'. It added that in seeking proposals from Parties to streamline, there could be other Parties who may not agree with those proposals as 'you may get a biased view'.

In response, Reifsnyder said that the document containing the views of Parties will be a listing of various ideas and is not about reaching consensus. 'If there are differences, it will be useful to elucidate them,' he added.

Malaysia, speaking for the **G77 and China**, also said that Parties were 'moving into a new phase' and asked what proposals for streamlining would be entertained and if the Co-chairs were referring to deletions, replacements etc. in the text. It also asked how the proposals will be captured and said there is a need for clarity on how this work in progress is carried forward to Bonn.

In response, Reifsnyder said that the 'answer is yes' as to what is to be deleted; what is combined; and what is replaced. On how to capture the views, he said that 'the goal will be to have a document of all the written submissions' and which 'can be attributed' to Parties.

When **Chile**, for the **Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)**, began to make suggestions on the text on what it would like to see amended and merged, a number of countries raised their flags on a point of order.

Malaysia, speaking for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)**, said that it thought that the purpose of the session was to discuss the criteria to be established for the streamlining so that

the basic ground rules are clear. It added that Parties need to agree on the fundamental rules on the criteria, the methodology etc. and there is a need for a consensus on the approach to streamlining. There is a need to see the negotiating text in its entirety (referring not just to the Lima text but the work done in Geneva too). ‘We should not embark on actual streamlining until the rules are clearly established,’ said Malaysia.

Egypt agreed with Malaysia and wanted the negotiating text to be put on the screen, which was agreed to by the Co-chairs.

Venezuela said that there was a risk in moving too quickly and that it was not possible to look at the ‘general/objective’ section without looking at the entire text as there were cross-cutting issues and linkages with other sections. It also said that there should be no streamlining before having clarity on the rules of procedure.

Nicaragua also expressed similar views and said that Parties need to agree step by step on how to proceed.

When Reifsynder asked for views based on the Lima text, while several countries appreciated the ADP Co-chairs’ efforts at being transparent, countries including **China, Venezuela, Argentina, India, the African Group, the European Union, the LMDC, Tanzania, Belize and Mexico** questioned the usefulness of going back to the Lima text when Parties at the Geneva session had made useful additions to the negotiating text which had moved beyond Lima and was more collectively owned.

Malaysia, speaking for the **LMDC**, said that Parties ‘have built a substantial text and we should not go back to the Lima text’. It said that Parties have gone a step further in providing alternatives to the Lima text and that it ‘would be regressive to go back to Lima’. So, it proposed that Parties work on this text from Geneva. It also said that the process was ‘entering a new stage’ on how to go about streamlining. All Parties need to agree ‘to the criteria and the ground rules and methodology’ by which work will be conducted.

Malaysia, recalling how the Lima COP nearly ‘blew up’, gave an example and said that one criterion for streamlining could be ‘to align the text with the Convention and the Lima decision and there should be no stepping back. Those aspects of proposals that are in conflict with the Lima decision or the Convention can go out the window.’ There should be a discussion on the establishment of the

ground rules on how the streamlining is done, reiterated Malaysia.

Sudan for the **African Group** said that in Geneva, Parties have gone a step further from the Lima text which can be Party-owned. It also stressed the importance of ‘procedural fairness’ and the need for clarity on the rules of engagement, supporting the views of Tuvalu and Malaysia. On how to move forward, it said repetitions and similarities in the text could be identified and suggested that the Co-chairs prepare a table to reflect this. Then, there could be facilitated discussions among Parties, which should be ‘light-touch’ that does not get into ‘a deep dive into the substance of the text’. On the issue of what matters should be in the agreement and what should be in COP decisions, it cautioned that ‘we are negotiating under a single mandate in a single outcome’.

The EU said that there were interesting suggestions from Malaysia and Sudan and was prepared to move forward on the basis of the text from Geneva which had ‘growing collective ownership’.

Brazil said that Parties had not reached the right moment to go deep into language of the text to start streamlining. It said there might be a need for ‘a table’ or a ‘non-paper’ which showed where the differences and redundancies are while ‘preserving the integrity of the elements text’.

The Russian Federation also did not concur on going deep into the ‘negotiation on language’ in the text in the streamlining exercise.

Saudi Arabia also said that it was not ready to get into a discussion about textual changes. It stressed the importance of looking at the entire text and to see how to handle the different elements through a ‘higher-level’ discussion.

Uganda also stressed the need to get the ground rules right.

In his concluding remarks, Reifsynder said that the full negotiating text will be posted on the UNFCCC website and discussions can continue (on Wednesday afternoon) on how to streamline the text. In addition, he wanted Parties to also give their views on the ‘structure of the Paris agreement and how it will look like’. On the request by some Parties for a table on redundancies, this could be done for the June session if Parties desired this as this was a ‘Party-driven process’ and he asked for further reflections in this regard on how the ADP should proceed.