

ADP: Differentiation, loss and damage key sticking points in adaptation

Lima, 4 Dec (Indrajit Bose) — The contact group on adaptation convened under the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) on 2-3 December 2014 at the ongoing climate talks in Lima. On the table was the ADP Co-chairs' non-paper on elements for a draft negotiating text.

Discussions on adaptation were categorized into long-term and global aspects of adaptation; commitments and contributions on adaptation; monitoring and evaluation; sharing of information, knowledge and lessons learned; institutional arrangements; and loss and damage. While there was little convergence on these areas, loss and damage, contribution and commitments, and long-term global goal saw heightened debates.

At the very outset, before discussions began, Saudi Arabia proposed that differentiation be tackled headlong. Once there is clarity on differentiation, it would help advance work, it said. As discussions went along, it became clear that differentiation, an underlying component in all the categories under discussion, stood out as a sticking point.

Developed countries were against any reference to differentiation whereas a large number of developing countries proposed language to ensure differentiation as per the Convention is reflected in the text. The latter wanted developed countries to take on commitments on adaptation whereas they would take actions, but the developed countries wanted all Parties to take actions. Canada said it would not support any "bifurcation" and supported the United States, which said that there is no case for differentiation since all Parties have to take action. China and India, along with several other developing countries responded by proposing inclusions to

strengthen the principle of differentiation as per the Convention.

On loss and damage, the developed countries were of the view that it should not feature in the agreement, whereas the developing countries wanted it as a separate element in the agreement. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) and the African Group all came together to demand that loss and damage should be anchored in the 2015 agreement. The LDCs said it is a red line for them. "We cannot just say it will be a COP decision. It isn't good enough," said Tuvalu.

Parties were also divided on a global goal on adaptation. Some developing countries were asking for a global adaptation goal that linked adaptation support to the level of mitigation but developed countries stressed that adaptation should not be linked to mitigation efforts of developed countries and that a global goal on adaptation was just not feasible. After the end of the contact group discussions on 2 December, Tuvalu asked: "We have heard many Parties say we need a balanced approach to adaptation in the new agreement, and yet if we delete references to adaptation, where is the balance? There needs to be sincerity, but we have heard that there is no sincerity to deal with adaptation," it said. It added that it is willing to engage in formal negotiations, but without any sincerity, there is no point in carrying on like this.

The key interventions by Parties are as follows:

Speaking for the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)**, Saudi Arabia stressed there needs to be differentiation between developed and developing countries as per the Convention. It said it is against any reference to language outside

of the Convention. While adaptation is linked to mitigation, it should also be linked to means of implementation. It called for the loss and damage mechanism to be anchored in the new agreement.

Associating itself with LMDC, **China** said there is nothing called common responsibility or universal commitment. “This is not correct language. We have only common but differentiated responsibility,” it said. Universal commitment must be changed to commitments and contributions, it added. China suggested change in language to stress on the differentiation aspect and said it is very important to be clear that support obligations are of the developed countries, including transfer of technology and to meet costs.

India also associated itself with LMDC and reemphasized that adaptation in the new agreement must be reflected in a comprehensive and balanced manner. “When we say balance, it is not only political parity with mitigation – it is total parity, be it financial flow or allocations, legally binding status, technology transfer or sense of urgency and commitments. We would like that to inform the entire text,” it said. India called for a long-term global goal for adaptation to be clearly articulated in both “qualitative and quantitative terms”. It said that determination of contribution and implementation could be country-driven with appropriate support from developed countries. It called for the continuation of existing institutions such as loss and damage to feature in the 2015 agreement.

Argentina too supported the LMDC and said means of implementation is key to success of adaptation. It proposed textual additions to strengthen the principle of differentiation in the adaptation section of the non-paper and said that commitments and contributions must be linked to differentiation between developed and developing countries. It said the wording should be commitment for developed countries and actions rather than contributions for developing countries.

Iran, El Salvador, Algeria and Ecuador too supported the LMDC. While **Iran** called for strengthening of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) in the context of Article 4 of the Convention, El Salvador said that developed countries’ proposals on adaptation is a departure from the Convention, which is unacceptable. Algeria added CBDR and respective capabilities (RC) should be reflected

throughout the text as must provision of adequate and predictable support from developed to developing countries.

Speaking for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**, **Nauru** said that adaptation and loss and damage needs to be separated, and that loss and damage should feature separately in the agreement. It called for more clarity on the global goal and asked for consistency in the use of the word commitments or contributions. It added that commitments should be in line with Article 4 of the Convention.

Zambia called for the need to reflect on differentiation and said adaptation should be a contribution by developing countries and a commitment for the developed countries. Balance between mitigation and adaptation is important, it said.

Ghana supported India on reference to both qualitative and quantitative adaptation goal. It said any obligation requirement must refer to Article 4.1 of the Convention. “All Parties are expected to implement adaptation action, taking into account CBDR and national priorities and circumstances. There needs to be flexibility for developing countries and especially for island states, Africa and least developed countries. It is critical that loss and damage is anchored in the new agreement, it said.

South Africa also emphasized that adaptation is a crucial element of the new agreement. Expression of a global goal is integral to the new agreement and the agreement needs to balance mitigation and adaptation. This must not just be balanced in reflection but in implementation too, it said. “There is global obligation in supporting adaptation,” South Africa added. There is need for assessment of adequacy of adaptation support. Loss and damage should be part of the new agreement and it should not be part of the adaptation section. It referred to loss and damage as part of global responsibility.

Tuvalu said loss and damage must figure separately from adaptation in the agreement since the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage is not a permanent institution. Loss and damage should get high-level support, it said. It sees value in having a long-term goal on adaptation since it is inevitable that action on adaptation will depend on mitigation. So, there should be a global goal that recognizes that adaptation goal is linked to

temperature trajectories, it said. It called for more discussions on commitments or contributions.

Timor Leste also stressed that loss and damage is beyond adaptation and must be anchored in the new agreement.

Speaking for the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)**, Mexico seconded the United States on deleting reference to any communication of commitments or contributions and that there should be no collective commitments on adaptation. Parties must review and reinforce their commitment, it said. On institutional mechanisms, it said that these could be part of decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), and need not be reflected in the new agreement.

The **European Union (EU)** said the word commitment/contribution could be replaced with action or measures and wanted language on support to be dealt with in the section on support.

Switzerland said it supports commitment by each Party and there is no need for differentiation in this. Calling for an “iterative adaptation” process it said it is not in favour of any prescriptive guidelines to undertake adaptation planning. Loss and damage is part of adaptation and should not figure separately, it said.

The US said that universal commitment is commitment by each Party to take enhanced action on adaptation. It said it would support language in the new agreement that acknowledges that each Party should undertake adaptation action but those with limited capacity would need support. The idea is to expand the pool of resources, it said. The US was against any reference to contributions and commitments and wanted it replaced with ‘action’. There was no

case for differentiation since all Parties would have to take action, it said. It was of the view that there should be no new institutional arrangements on loss and damage for the purposes of this agreement. The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with climate change impacts under the Convention is to be strengthened separately from the agreement, it said.

Norway and **Canada** supported the US. Canada said that the Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage needs more time to be implemented. Norway shared the same concern as the US and said that it was in favour of commitments by all Parties. Not in favour of differentiation, Canada called for more discussion on the use of words (it seemed to agree with actions, which was proposed by the US). It would not support any proposal on “bifurcation”, it said. Norway does not see any value in a global goal on adaptation. Canada said adaptation could not be quantified or measured and was thus not in favour of a global goal on adaptation.

Japan said it found it strange that each Party should communicate its adaptation commitment because it is not clear of the content of the commitment or contribution or action. It also said that the Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage is in the process of being initiated and therefore there should be no institutional arrangement on loss and damage in the 2015 agreement.

Australia is not in favour of any linkages between adaptation and support because there are complex challenges involving adaptation cost. Like its other Umbrella Group counterparts, it said no to differentiation.