

SBSTA: Lima session closes with outstanding issues

Lima, 9 Dec (Hilary Chiew) – The 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 41) closed on 6 December with no agreement on two key agenda items, which will be deferred to the next session.

Parties could not reach agreement on market and non-market mechanisms under the Convention which include three topics – framework for various approaches, non-market-based approaches and new market-based mechanism. The other item is methodological guidance for forest-related activities or “REDD plus”.

Meanwhile, continuing consultations are conducted by the SBI and SBSTA chairs under the authority of the Conference of the Parties (COP) President for two agenda items which are joined with the 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 41). These are forum and work programme of the impacts of the implementation of response measures, and the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

Another two agenda items that have yet to reach agreement continue to be under consultations by the SBI and SBSTA chairs under the authority of the COP President. These are: the work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national inventory reviews, for developed country Parties; and implications of the implementation of decisions 2/CMP.7 to 4/CMP.7 and 1/CMP 8 on the previous decisions on methodological issues related to the Kyoto Protocol, including those relating to Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Kyoto Protocol.

These consultations have a deadline of noon of 9 December.

SBSTA Chair Emmanuel Dumisani Dlamini (Swaziland) presided over the closing plenary.

Bolivia representing the Group of 77 and China (G77-China) welcomed the work of the Adaptation Committee and its collaboration with other bodies under the Convention, in particular the need for the operating entity of the financial mechanism to fulfil adaptation priorities. (The Global Environment Facility is the operating entity concerned.)

While welcoming the work of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC), it said there is a big gap for the technical mechanism (comprising TEC and the Climate Technology Centre and Network) to deliver tangible and meaningful technology transfer for developing countries. The G77-China said it is crucial to establish clear linkage between the technology mechanism and the financial mechanism. It encouraged the TEC to improve the enabling environment and address barriers for technology transfer.

On the methodological guidance for REDD plus (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries), the Group is frustrated that the SBSTA was not able to conclude this matter as it is time to move towards implementing the Warsaw Framework for REDD plus. It stressed that there is no need for further guidance on information for safeguards which should be determined by Parties that want to undertake REDD plus activities and not by donor countries. It underlined that consensus is close on the development of methodological guidance on non-market-based approaches and hoped to reach conclusion on this matter at the next SBSTA session.

The G77-China believed that there is space to consider the draft decision on the agenda item of forum and work programme of the impacts of implementation of response measures. The Group is prepared to engage constructively towards resolution of this matter and reaffirmed its submission for continuation of the forum and a mechanism for enhanced actions on response measures, and in particular to address policy issues of concern such as unilateral measures and to strengthen multilateral cooperation on this matter. (See section on Response Measures below.)

Nauru speaking for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said the process should be guided by climate science. It therefore continued to call on the Climate Technology Centre and Network to explore climate technology to close the emission gap to achieve the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5C.

Noting that there are some impacts of climate change that can no longer be adapted, it said the Group has been stressing the issue of loss and damage and had championed the establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage. It hoped the Group will be given a seat on the permanent Executive Committee.

On the 2013-2015 Review (to assess the adequacy of the long term global goal and the progress made towards that), it said it must be informed by the latest science and must lead to the delivery and implementation of actions to achieve the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5C.

Representing the Least Developed Countries (LDC), Nepal believed that there is no need for more guidance for safeguard information and that safeguards should be simple and broad enough to generate information according to national circumstances. It said countries had made progress during the readiness phase and it is therefore disappointed that there was no concrete result from this issue.

With regards to the composition of the executive committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, it would appreciate flexibility by Parties to reach a decision here in Lima.

On the 2013-2015 Review, it said there is need to acknowledge different sources of information to be considered by the Structured Expert Dialogue.

(Many developing countries call for information beyond that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which they say has gaps, especially in relation to the situation in developing countries.)

Panama speaking for the Coalition for Rainforest Nations said the Warsaw Framework for REDD plus adopted last year completed the many years of negotiation of climate-related forest activities. It said what is needed now is to start REDD plus activities on the ground, scale-up coherent distribution of finance. There is no need for further guidance on safeguards. Parties can now implement existing guidelines taking into account national capacity and capabilities, and benefit from sharing experience on how safeguards are implemented. It regretted that there is no agreement on the matter and reiterated its interest to see the matter resolved at the next SBSTA session with a view to reach a decision at COP 21 in Paris next year.

The **European Union** expressed thanks for the efficient time management that allowed substantial progress to be made. It that as this process is underpinned by science, it welcomed the adoption of the draft decision affirming the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as the most robust assessment ever provided on climate change.

On REDD plus, it acknowledged that Parties made great effort to try and find a middle ground but regretted that they could not reach an agreement.

While it is encouraged by discussion on new market mechanisms under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), the EU is disappointed that Parties are not able to progress on this matter under SBSTA. It is confident that this work can inform the ADP negotiations.

Australia speaking for the Umbrella Group also remarked on the time management that enabled Parties to work efficiently during the week. It welcomed the tremendous work of the Adaptation Committee over the past year and looked forward to the continuation of the work next year.

On loss and damage, it hoped Parties could resolve the issue of composition of the permanent executive committee to allow it to start work on its two-year work plan. It is disappointed that there was no agreement to advance work on the framework for various approaches, non-market-based approaches and new market-based mechanism but looked forward to resume work in June as well as under the ADP.

Monaco representing the Environmental Integrity Group welcomed progress of the Adaptation Committee and the Nairobi Work Programme but is disappointed that no decision can be taken on the framework for various approaches etc.

Response Measures

On the forum and work programme of the impacts of the implementation of response measures, Parties could not reach a conclusion and agreed to recommend that COP 20 continue consideration on the basis of the draft decision text contained in the annex.

Although the draft text was filled with brackets, Parties nevertheless could agree in general on the continuation of the forum but disagreed on the establishment of a mechanism for enhanced actions on response measures.

G77-China has proposed the mechanism and requested the subsidiary bodies (SBSTA and SBI) to develop the functions and modalities of the mechanism at their forty-second sessions, for consideration and adoption by COP 21 in Paris next year but Annex I Parties proposed 'no text'.

For the preamble, the following key paragraphs are in brackets:

[Also reaffirming that developed country Parties are urged to strive to implement policies and measures to respond to climate change in such a way as to avoid negative social and economic consequences for developing country Parties, taking into account

Article 3 of the Convention, and to assist these Parties to address such consequences by providing support, including financial resources, transfer of technology and capacity building, in accordance with Article 4 of the Convention, to build up the resilience of societies and economies negatively affected by response measures,]

[Also recalling that Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change; measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade,]

*Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage**

The outstanding disagreement was on the composition of the permanent Executive Committee. The matter was subsequently resolved shortly after the closing of the SBSTA 41 session.

It is learnt that the Eastern European countries are lobbying for a seat on the permanent Executive Committee from the seat allocation of non-Annex I (developing country) Parties.

On the issue of subsidiary structures, there was agreement that the Executive Committee may establish subcommittees, panels, thematic advisory groups or task-focused ad hoc working groups, to help execute the work of the Executive Committee in guiding the implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism. These bodies will include at least two members of the Executive Committee, one from a Party included in Annex I to the Convention and one from a Party not included in Annex I to the Convention.

(*with additional inputs from Doreen Stabinsky)