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Unease over 'Marrakech Call for Action'

Marrakech, 14 Nov (Hilary Chiew and Zhenyan Zhu) – Unease has emerged among some developing countries over the content of a confidential document being prepared behind closed doors by the Moroccan Presidency of the UN climate talks billed the 'Marrakech Call for Action'.

News about the call was formally announced at the end of a midday stocktaking plenary of the climate talks held on 12 Nov. The talks began on 7 Nov.

The President of the 22nd meeting of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22) Salaheddine Mezouar, who is also the Moroccan Foreign Minister, issued an appeal to Parties to support the 'Marrakech Call' and said that it was meant to "send a message to the international community."

Mezour said that he did not want to open up the document to a "complicated debate at this point because it could bog us down but I launch an appeal now to be supported by all delegations."

He did not reveal the contents of the 'Marrakech Call' but has made it available to some Parties and is expected to present the document and obtain the endorsement of the Heads of States and ministers who are arriving for the traditional high-level segment of the talks that begin on 15 Nov.

According to sources, the Moroccan Presidency has been conducting consultations behind the scene on the four-page document with groupings of Parties during which he sought inputs from Parties and listened to their concerns.

Some developing country Parties have expressed their grave concerns over the document to the COP Presidency and are deeply troubled by the lack of balance in the document which they claim did not make any reference to the UNFCCC, its principles and provisions; and did not stress the importance of pre-2020 actions.

The secret-text was leaked to the media and has also alarmed observers who warned that such a move is highly unwise and failed to appreciate the delicate political balance achieved among Parties at the Paris COP barely a year ago which resulted in the Paris Agreement and its accompanying set of decisions.

(See http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/not-trump-the-marrakech-call-hobbles-climate-change-talks-in-morocco-116111200180_1.html)

They are wondering how the COP President intends to get the endorsement of Parties of a non-negotiated text.

At the halfway stocktake, the COP President provided an opportunity to Parties to hear report backs from the various bodies who have been conducting negotiations over the course of the week.

Following the report backs, Parties provided their views on the process and divergent views were heard over whether to continue the work of the Ad hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) during the second week of the talks.

All subsidiary bodies including the APA are supposed to conclude their work with their respective closing plenaries scheduled on 14 Nov, before the commencement of the high-level segment.

A large number of developing country Parties opposed the idea of continuing the work of the APA in the second week while some developed countries as well as developing countries wanted to 'engage in the coming week to move forward with essential work to implement the Paris Agreement'. (See exchanges of Parties below.)

[During the first week, Parties also conducted work at the 45th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI45) and the 45th session of the

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA45).]

Mezouar also informed Parties that the historical first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1) will be declared open late morning on 15 Nov.

He said Heads of governments are arriving to participate in the high-level segment to celebrate the entry-into-force of the Paris Agreement as well as the opening of the CMA1 and "everything we have achieved including under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol."

He also noted the key events for the coming week: the second part of the 'facilitative dialogue on enhancing ambition and support', the 'second biennial ministerial high-level on climate finance', the high-level event on 'sustainable economic transition and economic diversification', and, the high-level on 'global climate action'.

The COP 22 President informed Parties that consultations are still underway on several matters: the adoption of the CMA rules of procedure; vulnerability of Africa; access to support to the Green Climate Fund and Climate Technology Centre and Network by those Parties with special circumstances; and the platform for local communities and indigenous peoples (under paragraph 135 of the Paris decision 1/CP21).

(Paragraph 135 reads: *Recognizes the need to strengthen knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples related to addressing and responding to climate change, and establishes a platform for the exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and integrated manner.*)

On the consultations on the preparation for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement and CMA1, the COP President stressed that they were going well and he anticipated a smooth launch of CMA1. The consultations in this regard are being led by Ambassador Aziz Mekouar.

The COP President Mezouar then invited SBI, SBSTA and APA Chairs to provide update on their respective work.

SBSTA Chair Carlos Fuller (Belize) was pleased that almost all agenda items had been concluded. He noted that work is still on-going on the review of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage from the impacts of climate change (WIM); matters relating to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (relating cooperative approaches); and the modalities for the reporting of financial resources.

He also informed that in the discussion on the report of the Adaptation Committee, concerns were raised on insufficient resources, noting that this might be a common issue across bodies and here was need to find innovative ways to address the matter.

SBI Chair Tomasz Chruszczow (Poland) informed that the SBI held the first part of its closing plenary on 11 Nov with the adoption of a number of draft conclusions and draft decisions after only three days of intense negotiation as Parties were able to advance or reached agreement.

He said the Cancun measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) system is fully operational now with the convening of the facilitative sharing of views by seven developing country Parties which presented information on their biennial update report on 10 Nov and there were active interactions through several rounds of questions and answers and sharing of information in a transparent manner.

He also added that developed country Parties expressed deep appreciation for their efforts and the process was seen as very positive by all Parties in building the path for the transparency framework under the Paris Agreement.

Chruscczow pointed out that parallel to this stock-take session, the Multilateral Assessment under the International Assessment and Review process (for developed countries) was being convened and he invited Parties to join the two-day process that will continue on 14 Nov.

He was pleased to report that thanks to hard work during the Bonn inter-session in May (2016) and here, the first meeting of the Paris Committee on Climate Change will be convened next May, pending nomination of members.

He also noted that Parties had advanced work on the development of the modalities and procedures for the operation and use of the public registry referred to in Article 4.12 and 7.12 of the Paris Agreement.

(Article 4.12 refers to the nationally determined contributions communicated by Parties that shall be recorded in a public registry and Article 7.12 refers to the adaptation communications of Parties

that shall be recorded in a public registry, that are to be maintained by the secretariat.)

Parties, he added also advanced on important issues under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol and he hoped to complete work on the review of the WIM.

APA co-Chair Jo Tyndall (New Zealand) reported good progress so far despite complexities and limited time and that Parties met between four to six times on each agenda item as well as in informal, informal setting to progress work. Initial versions of co-facilitators notes show factual summary and iterations as consultations continue, she said, pointing out that the notes are available on the website.

Global Climate Action Champion Hakima El Haite (Morocco) reported on the thematic events held under the Global Climate Action Agenda and that she would continue to hold consultations on how to provide guidance to the technical examination process to scale up action in the pre-2020 period to ensure the objective of the Convention can be met with the aim to publish proposals for scaling up of pre-220 actions on 17 Nov.

Following are the highlights of the exchanges on the continuation of the APA work in week two.

Proposing to continue the APA work in the second week, **Switzerland** representing the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** said that "all of our experts are willing to work next week to further our understanding," adding that many delegations smaller than the EIG had underlined willingness to work too. Technically, it said, Parties are able to continue beyond Monday (14 Nov) evening and Parties should use remaining days in Marrakech to better understand better opinions and views to better prepare for next meeting when delegates returned to their capitals.

This was immediately met with objection from two developing countries groupings and several developing countries which took to the floor.

Speaking for the **Like-minded Developing Countries (LMDC), Bolivia** said Parties need to take into account the balance between pre-2020 and post-2020 actions.

"We heard a lot of progress in several groups including the APA. Our suggestion is to close the APA as it was originally planned and focus on pre-2020 actions and the means of implementation next week," it stressed.

Maldives representing the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** said the Group has always supported advancing work. However, it said next week delegations would be focusing on many ministerial events. "AOSIS believes that we need more work during the inter-session next year and do not want to reopen issues as we just started substantive work of APA," it noted.

India cautioned on the need for balance work and not allow for a pick and choose approach. It said Parties must not look at some work whereas other issues which are equally if not more important languish in the background, noting the importance of pre-2020 actions.

"While we prepare the rules book for post-2020 (referring to rules for the implementation of the Paris Agreement) which is four years ahead of us, our focus on pre-2020 actions has been limited. The issue before us really is what kind of work plan we have for 2016 to 2020. Are we just relying on non-governmental organisations or non-state actors to deliver on the emissions gap?" it asked.

India lamented that "there are specific mandates and line of actions that need to be taken forward but we do not find traction on these. It is important that we focus on concrete action in pre-2020 (by) looking at revisit of Kyoto Protocol targets, and the timeline for ratification.

"We are talking about timeline for Paris Agreement by 2017 or 2018 but not the timeline for the pre-2020 issues according to paragraph 3 and 4 of the decision 1/CP 19 (of the Warsaw COP in 2013). We have to prioritise this in a significant manner for next week," it urged.

Nicaragua in highlighting the increasing impacts of climate change stressed that pre-2020 is not an abstract question and that the Doha Amendment (for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol) needs to be implemented immediately.

Saudi Arabia said it would support the COP Presidency's outline of work for next week and feared that 'changing the gear' would interrupt progress, noting the excellent progress made and the momentum can be continued next year.

Echoing support for focus on pre-2020 actions, **China** said Parties should not only concern themselves on arrangements of the post-2020 timeframe under the Paris Agreement but should also be concerned of actions before that.

Australia echoing EIG, said Heads of States would be flying in shortly and 'it is not the right

way to say we are not doing anything'. Stopping all work is not a good suggestion; we need to keep moving things in tandem, it opined.

The **European Union** said it supported the EIG and Australia and it was ready to engage in the coming week to move forward the essential work to implement the Paris Agreement. It said the many high-level events will focus on crucial issues of pre-2020 but at the same time Parties need to take advantage of next week to move forward on completing the rules book.

Costa Rica speaking for the **Independent Association of Latin America and Caribbean (AILAC)** supported the idea of making the best use of time by prolonging the work of the APA beyond 14 Nov as 'Parties need to deepen the technical work'.

Supporting the extension of work, representing **the Least Developed Countries (LDCs),** the **Democratic Republic of Congo** said a great amount of work needed to be done particularly when it come to implementing the Paris Agreement and it believed that the remaining time can help to guarantee that the Marrakech COP is the COP of action.

Honduras, Mongolia, Argentina and Canada supported extending work on the APA in the second week.

The APA Co-chairs have informed Parties that the body will conclude its work on Monday, 14 Nov as originally planned. (See separate article on the APA contact group held on 12 Nov).