

Developing countries stress need for different treatment

Panama City, 4 October (Meena Raman) – Developing countries strongly expressed differences in the treatment of their obligations in relation to mitigation actions as being distinct from that of developed countries following the decision in Cancun last year under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

They expressed these views at the first informal group meeting on mitigation actions of developing countries, which took place in the afternoon of 2nd October in Panama City. The meeting was co-facilitated by Ms. Karine Hertzberg of Norway and Mr. Jose Garibaldi Fernandez of Peru.

Parties at the meeting focused on discussions on international consultations and analysis (ICA) of their mitigation actions and on biennial update reports (BURs).

(In Cancun, Parties had agreed to the conduct of ICA of developing country biennial update reports relating to their mitigation actions under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation).

Developing countries pointed out the differences between the ICA process and that of international assessment and review (IAR) of developed country mitigation actions. They also stressed differences between the biennial reports to be submitted by developed countries and BURs of developing countries.

Developed countries during the session expressed the need for addressing the overall ambition level of the mitigation pledges of developing countries.

Australia said that there was a gap between the pledges indicated by Parties and what they would deliver in terms of limiting the temperature rise to below 2 degree C. It referred to its joint-submission

with Norway to build on the pledges made in Cancun.

(The joint-submission calls for a legal agreement with binding mitigation commitments by both developed and developing countries, especially from “major economies”, which includes a formal way of capturing Parties’ targets and actions in annexes attached to decisions, and a periodic process for scaling up ambition levels and mitigation efforts over time.) It said that there was need for more details on the underlying assumptions of the pledges including relevant metrics such as base year or other reference value, gases covered and sectors and duration of commitment so that there was a way to compare the actions and what they add up to. It wanted a legally binding outcome that can be scaled up to new treaty.

The **European Union** said that there was need to address the overall ambition level of developing countries and the process for clarifying their mitigation actions. It said that the pledges of developing countries had not been really understood and wanted sufficient time to discuss this.

Cuba in response to proposals for the scaling up of ambition of developing country pledges said that there was nothing in the Cancun decision in this regard. It was opposed to the idea of a spin-off group to discuss such elements, as there is no common understanding among Parties.

International consultations and analysis

Discussions were held on the issue of international consultations and analysis. The co-facilitator suggested that Parties focus discussions on the objectives and principles of the ICA; possible elements of inputs and outcomes of the process and procedures for the ICA.

Brazil said that the ICA is a process that leads to transparency, as distinct from that which leads to a review (of mitigation actions). This has clear implications on the outcomes of the ICA. On the principles, the notion of the process being non-intrusive, non-punitive, non-confrontational and respectful of national sovereignty is an important part of the process. These adjectives and characteristics are important in the nature of the ICA process as distinct from the international review and assessment (IAR) (of developed country mitigation actions). The ICA leads towards a greater sharing of information on actions than actually offering corrections to what developing countries are implementing in their mitigation actions. The Cancun decision makes clear that the ICA process is not for the evaluation of the domestic policies of developing countries.

On inputs for the process, Brazil said that the Cancun decision was clear in indicating the BURs are an input for the ICA process. The ICA discussions are intended to generate international consideration and transparency of domestically supported actions. In the case of internationally supported mitigation actions, they are subject to measurement, reporting and verification (MRV). The output of the ICA would be a summary report, which is an objective recording of the process. On the process, the consultation phase is before the technical phase, said Brazil.

China supported the views of Brazil and said that the ICA is a technical process, in which the consultations come first and then the analysis. The consultations are held between the technical experts through a facilitative sharing of views. Technical support is given to developing countries as well as further financial and technical support to improve the BURs. Following the consultations, there is the technical analysis, which aims at increasing transparency and will result in a technical summary report.

Pakistan also supported Brazil in stressing that the ICA is not a review process and is distinct from the IAR and that the ICA is not done in the context of compliance and comparability of efforts but in the context of transparency and capacity in providing information. The frequency of the ICA depends on the voluntary nature of the mitigation actions, the frequency of the national communications of developing countries and the BURs. Flexibility is based on the level of support provided for the

national communications and BURs and the capacities of developing countries.

Mali for the **African Group, India, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Marshall Islands** and **Mexico** all echoed the view that the ICA and IAR are distinct processes.

Ethiopia, speaking for the **LDCs** said that the ICA should be less onerous than the IAR and that there should be flexibility in the reporting for LDCs in terms of the content and timing.

Australia said that there was a clear need for flexibility as to who would participate in the ICA. It said that one criteria could be based on the share of a developing country's contribution to global emissions. **Canada** and **Japan** also expressed similar views. **Norway** said that there was need for flexibility regarding the frequency of the participation of developing countries in the ICA process depending on national circumstances.

The **United States** said that there was need for clarity on the ICA process and that the first step is an analysis by experts of the information on the mitigation actions and associated methodologies and that the second step was the facilitative sharing. **New Zealand** echoed the views of the US in this regard.

The **European Union** agreed that there were differences between the ICA and the IAR but said that both needed to be robust. It said that the analysis phase preceded the consultations phase. It was also open to exploring flexibilities for LDCs and SIDs and others too if there were practical purposes for this.

The co-facilitators will prepare a non-paper for further discussion.

Biennial update reports (BURs)

Brazil said that the Cancun decision was clear on what the core elements of the BURs are - which are the provision of updates, information on actions, financial, technology and capacity-building needs and information on the support received. On the issue of guidelines for the BURs, they are part of the national communications and there are existing guidelines for this. There was need to ensure early and sustainable provision of resources for the BURs.

Pakistan shared similar views as Brazil.

China also said that the BURs are part of national communications and that the current guidelines could be used. On the content, it said that it was an update of the GHG inventory and was not a full update of the inventory. This depended on the national circumstances and the ability of developing countries to provide the information. On the frequency and time frame, the provision of support was key to early submissions and happens two years after the national communications. Where there is a full national communication, there was no need for the BUR as this would be duplication.

South Africa agreed with China and stressed that there should be maximum flexibility for developing countries on the content as there was a diversity of mitigation actions among developing countries with a wide variety. Standardized templates and harmonisation of information is at odds with the notion of diversity of actions of developing countries.

Brazil said that on the relationship between the national communications and BURs, the information would be different and the BURs are not a subset of the national communications. BURs are updates where the information is available. It also agreed with South Africa that the notion of harmonization or standards or generating of comparability is being out of touch with the concept

of nationally appropriate mitigation actions of developing countries, as the idea of “nationally appropriate” must be respected.

India supported Brazil and China and echoed similar views.

Mali speaking for the **African Group** said that the group only accounted for 4% of the GHG emissions of the world and there was need for the BURs to reflect the support needed and support received.

Australia said that priority in the provision of BURs is for developing countries with high emissions and for this to be done every two years. It said that there were strong practical reasons for BURs not to be contingent on support.

The **United States** said that the frequency of the BURs should be every two years. SIDs and LDCs could be provided with flexibility and for those who cannot do this in the first stage.

The **European Union** also said that the frequency should be every two years that it did not see the distinction between the biennial reports of developed countries and the BURs, which are part of the national communications.

The co-facilitators will prepare a non-paper for the next session to reflect the views of Parties.