

Disagreement over linkage between mitigation ambition of developed countries to developing countries actions

Panama City, 7 October (Lim Li Lin) – Disagreements arose between developed and developing country Parties over the insistence by developed countries to link discussions on their mitigation ambition to developing country mitigation actions at the meeting of informal group on mitigation actions of developed countries under the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) held on Thursday, 6 October.

Developed countries wanted to have the discussion on the ambition in a global context, and not just in relation to Annex I (developed) countries. In this regard, they supported a broader setting for the discussion. Most developing countries on the other hand insisted that the mandate of the group was to discuss developed country mitigation and not that of developing countries.

A summary paper was produced by the co-facilitators on 'matters relating to paragraphs 36-38 of the Cancun Agreements' to facilitate discussions in the informal group. The session was co-facilitated by Karine Hertzberg from Norway and Jose Alberto Garibaldi Fernandez from Peru.

The co-facilitators' paper contains a summary of the discussions of the group on paragraphs 36-38 of the Cancun COP decision. The paragraphs concerned are:

"36. Takes note of quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets to be implemented by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention as communicated by them and contained in document FCCC/SB/2011/INF.14 (to be issued);

37. Urges developed country Parties to increase the ambition of their economy-wide emission reduction targets, with a view to reducing their aggregate anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol to a level consistent with the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;

38. Requests the secretariat to organize workshops to clarify the

assumptions and the conditions related to the attainment of these targets, including the use of carbon credits from the market-based mechanisms and land use, land-use change and forestry activities, and options and ways to increase their level of ambition;"

The co-facilitators' paper summarizes the discussion of the group generally, and the discussion on quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets, level of ambition and accounting framework.

The **United States** said that the language on ambition needs to apply to developed and developing countries, as it is a global ambition gap. We are now in the Cancun mandate, and are discussing something different, it said. It said that the section on ambition in the summary paper implies some process to close the ambition gap, and some would see it as process matter in the context of the review. It said that it should be clear that the intention is not to mandate an immediate process now.

The US supported a technical paper to understand better the targets put forward. It said that there should be a common template based approach for recoding the assumptions behind the pledges, not the pledges itself, and that this was not part of any process, but for clarifying new information. It said that the IPCC serves as the common accounting framework under the Convention currently and that there was no convergence around having a common accounting framework.

It concluded it was looking for similar language on Annex I and non-Annex I activities, and that many of these issues cannot be resolved just in the context of Annex I countries, and that a broader setting to discuss these issues was necessary. In that context, it questioned the helpfulness of the listing by the co-facilitators at this stage.

Australia supported having a common space to talk about ambition as ambitious targets should be met by all “major emitters”, not just Annex I countries. It said that there could be a technical paper on options to close the ambition gap, and this is a global gap that applies to all, not just Annex I countries. It said that the accounting framework should also apply to “major economies”, to provide certainty and to understand what others are doing. It supported common accounting rules, subject to national circumstance, which would allow countries to come forward with more ambitious pledges. It also supported identifying a process moving forward.

Canada also expressed similar views to the US and Australia.

China said that this discussion is on the mitigation of developed countries, and should not include developing countries, as paragraphs 36-38 of the Cancun decision was on developed country mitigation. It said that there are mechanisms under the Convention, and provisions for developing countries under separate articles. It said that there should be no conditions attached to the domestic mitigation pledges of developed countries. The listing under ‘level of ambition’ in the co-facilitator’s summary includes both developed and developing countries, and did not accurately reflect options for increasing the ambition of developed country mitigation. For example, supporting implementation of nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) by developing countries has nothing to do with developed countries and should not appear in the listing. It stressed on the importance of closing the mitigation gap between developed country pledges and the range of mentioned in the IPPC report, and on ways to do so.

Mali agreed that ambition in this context refers only to developed country Parties. It said that there should be a common understanding of those pledges and how they transform to tonnes of CO2 equivalent, and supported having submissions on that process in order to reflect that in our work. It supported a common accounting framework for monitoring progress, and comparability. It suggested that papers such as by UNEP and the Stockholm Environment Institute could be synthesized to clarify the ambition gap, and what the implications of delaying are. Then, there should be a process to convert to assigned amounts into a calculation of the carbon budget, in order to understand the consequences on our economies and sustainable development, it said. It said that there should be a decision on a work programme based on this for next year which will also help the review process.

South Africa supported that the idea that the technical paper needs to be translated into assigned amounts under a carbon budget, and that the amount in tonnes is required as this is the basis for comparability to quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives (QELROs) under the Kyoto Protocol. Without a clear and robust starting point, there will be no environmental integrity, and without a budget, there cannot be trade, it said. It said that we should have common accounting rules, and that there was no need to wait until Durban. It said that the African group’s proposals which are in the form of detailed text have not been reflected in the co-facilitators’ summary.

Saudi Arabia agreed that the discussion on the level of ambition cannot go beyond the mandate which is in respect of developed countries only.

Brazil expressed concerns with views that developed and developing country mitigation should be mirrored and needed a similar structure.

Bolivia said that other texts from the group on biennial reports and international assessment and review are much more developed, but are secondary issues. It stressed the importance of the work on the level of ambition. It said that QELROs are to be undertaken by Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, and not under the Convention unless a country is not a Party to the Protocol.

It said that the ambition gap must first be defined, and then how to share the burden between Annex I and non-Annex I Parties in a framework for equitable sharing defined. It said that non-Annex I Parties can undertake mitigation as far as it does not affect their sustainable development, and if they receive financial support. However, these issues are linked to discussions on shared vision and finance which are being blocked by developed countries. Even so, it said, non-Annex I Parties are doing more than Annex I Parties in terms of mitigation. Annex I Parties should not hide their own inaction behind non-Annex I Parties, it said.

On process issues, Switzerland requested to Secretariat to put together current knowledge on the ambition gap. Colombia said that it was important to have a paper on the ambition gap and ways of closing it. Chile asked what elements that could be translated into a negotiating text. It said that the ambition gap should be closed and that this analysis should be done through the UNFCCC process, through a workshop or a technical paper, pulling in outside expertise for example from UNEP.