

Developing countries remain firm on the Kyoto Protocol

Geneva, 13 Oct (Lim Li Lin) -- The final plenary of the Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) in Panama City on 7 October heard strong statements by developing countries on the importance of adopting the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in Durban.

Developed countries, meanwhile, stressed on a new climate change framework and on the continuity of the market mechanisms. The session in Panama City was the final negotiations before the Meeting of the Parties (CMP) in December in Durban, South Africa.

At the start of the plenary, the AWG-KP Chair, Adrian Macey from New Zealand, summarized that over the week, the contact group had discussed policy issues including the nature of the second commitment period, that a number of Annex I (developed country) Kyoto Parties have indicated that they will not undertake quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives (QELROs) in a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and the continuity of the market mechanisms after 2012.

[In fact, developing countries have insisted that the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period must be adopted in Durban, through an amendment to its Annex B as mandated. Developing countries have also questioned why the Protocol's market mechanisms should continue post 2012, in the absence of a second commitment period starting in 2013.]

A revised proposal by the Chair to facilitate negotiations was issued at the end of the meeting, "streamlining, clarifying and updating" the text based on the work of the spin-off groups during the week. The Secretariat

produced a table of possible QELROs, through a technical exercise of converting the emission reduction pledges of Annex I Parties into QELROs as required under the Kyoto Protocol. Japan, Canada and Russia asked for their QELROs to be removed from that table, as they do not intend to undertake a second period of emission reductions under the Kyoto Protocol.

The Chair concluded that it was the strong wish of Parties to complete the AWG-KP work in Durban, and that many parts of the text are complete technically and await a political decision, although there is still some technical work to be done, including on land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF). He stressed on the need for effective time management in Durban, and on the usefulness of the time allocated to the AWG-KP in Durban.

Ambassador Diseko from South Africa, which will be the President of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the CMP when it is held in Durban at the end of the year, said that their primary goal was to ensure that Panama produced a negotiating text for Durban. She said that global problems require global solutions, and re-affirmed South Africa's belief in multilateralism. Central to the Durban package is the balance across the two negotiating tracks, the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA (Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention), and the balance within the negotiating tracks, she said. The Cancun decisions must be operationalized, and there should be a focus on key political issues, of which the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period is central, she said.

Argentina, speaking for **the Group of 77 and China**, said that two weeks ago, G77 and China

Ministers re-affirmed their political commitment to the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period. It said that the second commitment period is the central priority and cornerstone for Durban, and any other result will undermine the rules based system, and cast a shadow on multilateralism. In accordance with the Bali Road Map (adopted by the UNFCCC COP in 2007), the AWG-LCA has to advance in parallel to the AWG-KP. This is the only way for a successful, comprehensive and balanced outcome in Durban based on the principles of the UNFCCC, in particular equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, it said. There should be no gap between the commitment periods, and the level of mitigation ambition by developed countries must be raised, it added.

Grenada, speaking on behalf of **the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**, said that the Kyoto Protocol is the only legally binding agreement that we now have that puts in place quantified emission reduction commitments by Annex I Parties, and it is essential to build upon it. Failure to secure ambitious emission reductions in a second commitment period will compromise the survival of small island states and other vulnerable countries, it said. It asked the three Kyoto Parties that have announced that they will not take on QELROs in a second commitment period to reconsider "what might be viewed as extreme positions", as there should be no technical impediments, only political ones.

[The 3 Parties are Canada, Japan and Russia.]

It said that its expectations for Durban are: 1) a substantial increase in mitigation ambition from Annex I Parties, 2) establishing a second commitment period from 2013-2017 with a single legally binding base year of 1990, as part of a two track outcome that complements a legally binding outcome under the AWG-LCA, 3) closing loopholes - LULUCF, surplus assigned amount units (AAUs), new gases, and improving mechanisms, and 4) ensuring the continuity of the Kyoto Protocol commitments through 2012, with new and more ambitious Annex B commitments pending ratification and entry into the force of the second commitment period.

Democratic Republic of Congo, for **the African Group**, said that agreement to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol is absolutely essential, and ensuring the full

implementation of the Kyoto Protocol through a second commitment period in Durban has also been emphasized by all African Ministers as an utmost priority. For Durban, deep and binding emission reductions in accordance with science and equity is required, it said.

The African Group's expectations for Durban are the adoption of an amendment to Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol (for the second commitment period) and the strengthening of Annex I Party commitments in a manner consistent with their fair contribution towards limiting warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It said that, "Africa cannot conceive of a future climate regime in which we dismantle a central pillar we have built together. We must build the rest of the climate regime up around it, and continue the Kyoto Protocol through a second and subsequent commitment periods".

Gambia, on behalf of **the least developed countries (LDCs)**, stressed on the importance of a legally binding framework. The Kyoto Protocol must continue, and the second commitment period urgently agreed in Durban in order to avoid a gap as agreed in Cancun, and according to the decision that established the AWG-KP six years ago, it said. It urged those Parties that championed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and after to take up the mantle once again. Environmental integrity should be ensured through limiting the carbon markets and closing loopholes. It said that in order to break the logjam, the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period is key towards ensuring a legally binding agreement under the AWG-LCA that is in accordance with equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. It could not accept political decisions in either negotiating track.

Bolivia, on behalf of **the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)**, said that it was shameful the way that more conditions and flexibilities are being required by Annex I Parties to comply with what they should be doing by law. It said that it was building alliances with all countries, particularly the LDCs, and that it could not accept making the African continent the tomb of the Kyoto Protocol.

China said that developed countries have an unshakable legal, historical and moral obligation

to renew the Kyoto Protocol through a second commitment period, and that the outcome of Durban must be based on the Bali Roadmap.

South Africa said that the Kyoto Protocol is central to the multilateral rules-based system. Failure to reach agreement on the second commitment period would send a negative signal to the process; instead we should send a strong signal to the world that the UNFCCC is still relevant. The Kyoto Protocol may not be sufficient, but it is necessary, it said.

Papua New Guinea for **the Coalition for Rainforest Nations** said that it had made a proposal for a REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) plus mechanism for results based action with units creditable under the Kyoto Protocol, as there is not much progress in the AWG-LCA on new market mechanisms.

Australia, speaking for **the Umbrella Group**, said that the Kyoto Protocol is an important part of efforts to reduce emissions. Its rules and infrastructure have much to offer as we transition to a new climate change framework, it said. It is only one part of the story, as without major emitters, we cannot deliver. Without a balancing agreement that covers all major

emitters, it makes no sense for the climate, it said. It stressed on the importance of the continuity of the market-based approach, which is the keystone of new regime, and urged for political next steps, courage, and pragmatism.

The **European Union** said that balance across and between both negotiating tracks is important. It said that it was encouraged with the discussions on a future legally binding framework and legal form (in the AWG-LCA), and this will require deeper political attention. It stressed on the need for market mechanisms post 2012 and that new mechanisms should be part of the Durban package. It advocated the establishment of a post 2012 rules based and comprehensive legally binding framework engaging all major economies, and said that it was willing to consider a second commitment period as part of a wider global and comprehensive outcome.

Two recent reports show that substantial progress has been made by member states in breaking the link between economic growth and emissions, it said. Since 1990, it has reduced its emissions by 15.5%, while its economy grew by 41%. However, the EU alone cannot solve the climate problem, and the Durban outcome must address this fact, it said.