

COP21 decision on enhanced action prior to 2020

New Delhi, 28 December (Indrajit Bose) — Besides the Paris Agreement, Parties to the UNFCCC's 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP21) also adopted a decision on enhanced action prior to 2020.

Since the Paris Agreement focuses on actions post-2020, the COP21 decision on pre-2020 enhanced action is important for climate action to continue in the current time-frame between 2016-2020, even as Parties have to continue further work pending the entry into force of the Paris Agreement.

There have been several fights in the run up to and during the Paris climate talks under the Durban Platform process on pre-2020 actions (known then as negotiations under workstream 2, with workstream 1 focused on the Paris Agreement).

Developing countries have focused much of their attention to ensure that developed countries fulfill all their existing commitments under the various decisions from Cancun (2010) under the Bali process and the Kyoto Protocol, to step up ambition on emissions reductions as agreed and to fulfil their commitments on the mobilization of climate finance of USD 100 billion a year by 2020. (The COP21 decision has extended this finance timeframe to 2025 and for a new collective goal to be set post- 2025).

The focus of the developed countries for the pre-2020 period has largely been on technical expert meetings and high-level events, often termed by developing countries as “talk-shops that do not focus on any real action”.

Also, developed countries have tried to outsource climate action to “non-state” actors and initiatives outside of the UNFCCC to plug their emissions gap in the pre-2020 period in relation to the pledges of countries and what countries must do to keep temperature rise to below the 2 degree C temperature goal agreed in Cancun.

While the Paris decision adopted a mix of developed and developing countries' proposals, one of the big

wins for developing countries is the launch of a technical expert process on adaptation (see further details on this below).

However, the call especially by the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), for a strong mechanism to accelerate the implementation of current obligations (under the Bali process and the Kyoto Protocol) has been watered down in the decision to the conduct of a “facilitative dialogue” at COP22 next year to assess the progress in implementation. This was due to the resistance by developed countries, especially in not wanting to raise their mitigation ambition any further.

Below are some of the key highlights of the COP21 decision on pre-2020 enhanced actions.

Ratifying and implementing the **Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol** has been a key demand of developing countries, as that would give effect to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol for emissions reduction by developed countries. The relevant parts of the decision are as follows:

“106. Resolves to ensure the highest possible mitigation efforts in the pre-2020 period, including by:

(a) Urging all Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that have not already done so to ratify and implement the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol;

(b) Urging all Parties that have not already done so to make and implement a mitigation pledge under the Cancun Agreements;

(c) Reiterating its resolve, as set out in decision 1/CP.19, paragraphs 3 and 4, to accelerate the full implementation of the decisions constituting the agreed outcome pursuant to decision 1/CP.13 and enhance ambition in the pre-2020 period in order to ensure the highest possible mitigation efforts under the Convention by all Parties;

(d) Inviting developing country Parties that have not submitted their first biennial update reports to do so as soon as possible;

(e) Urging all Parties to participate in the existing

measurement, reporting and verification processes under the Cancun Agreements, in a timely manner, with a view to demonstrating progress made in the implementation of their mitigation pledges”.

The provision in sub-paragraph 106(a), however, only “urges” countries to ratify the Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol without specifying a deadline for this, due to resistance from developed countries.

Sub-paragraph (c) refers to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Warsaw decision (1/CP.19) and the Bali Action Plan (1/CP.13) and developing countries have said in the [past](#) sessions that these decisions provide a comprehensive mandate in relation to the pre-2020 actions, and are not just a mitigation-centric focus.

The paragraphs below provide how the existing technical examination process on **mitigation** would be strengthened and also assessed in 2017.

“110. Resolves to strengthen, in the period 2016–2020, the existing technical examination process on mitigation as defined in decision 1/CP.19, paragraph 5(a), and decision 1/CP.20, paragraph 19, taking into account the latest scientific knowledge, including by:

(a) Encouraging Parties, Convention bodies and international organizations to engage in this process, including, as appropriate, in cooperation with relevant non-Party stakeholders, to share their experiences and suggestions, including from regional events, and to cooperate in facilitating the implementation of policies, practices and actions identified during this process in accordance with national sustainable development priorities;

(b) Striving to improve, in consultation with Parties, access to and participation in this process by developing country Party and non-Party experts;

(c) Requesting the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network in accordance with their respective mandates:

(i) To engage in the technical expert meetings and enhance their efforts to facilitate and support Parties in scaling up the implementation of policies, practices and actions identified during this process;

(ii) To provide regular updates during the technical expert meetings on the progress made in facilitating the implementation of policies, practices and actions previously identified during this process;

(iii) To include information on their activities under this process in their joint annual report to the Conference of the

Parties;

(d) Encouraging Parties to make effective use of the Climate Technology Centre and Network to obtain assistance to develop economically, environmentally and socially viable project proposals in the high mitigation potential areas identified in this process.

114. Also decides to conduct in 2017 an assessment of the process referred to in paragraph 110 above so as to improve its effectiveness;”

Another key issue for developing countries was on **finance**, i.e. to have a roadmap for the USD 100 billion annually by 2020. Paragraph 115 takes care of that to an extent, but developing countries wanted the roadmap to be spelt out in the decision itself but this did not materialise. Paragraph 115 reads:

“Resolves to enhance the provision of urgent and adequate finance, technology and capacity-building support by developed country Parties in order to enhance the level of ambition of pre-2020 action by Parties, and in this regard strongly urges developed country Parties to scale up their level of financial support, with a concrete roadmap to achieve the goal of jointly providing USD 100 billion annually by 2020 for mitigation and adaptation while significantly increasing adaptation finance from current levels and to further provide appropriate technology and capacity-building support.”

The above paragraph must also be read with paragraph 54 of the COP21 decision which states as follows: *“Also decides that, in accordance with Article 9, paragraph 3, of the (Paris) Agreement, developed countries intend to continue their existing collective mobilization goal through 2025 in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation; ...”*

As pointed out above, the decision in paragraph 54 has extended the timeframe for the mobilization of finance through to 2025, instead of concluding in 2020.

“116. Decides to conduct a facilitative dialogue in conjunction with the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to assess the progress in implementing decision 1/CP.19, paragraphs 3 and 4, and identify relevant opportunities to enhance the provision of financial resources, including for technology development and transfer and capacity- building support, with a view to identifying ways to enhance the ambition of mitigation efforts by all Parties, including identifying relevant opportunities to enhance the provision and mobilization of support and enabling environments.”

As stated in paragraph 116 above, there will be a facilitative dialogue in 2016 to assess the progress in

implementing paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Warsaw decision, which relates to accelerating the full implementation of the decisions constituting the agreed outcome pursuant to the Bali Action Plan, (in particular in relation to the provision of means of implementation, including technology, finance and capacity building support for developing country Parties), and the Kyoto Protocol.

However, paragraph 116 is a compromise. The LMDC had called for the launch of an accelerated implementation process to give effect to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Warsaw decision (1/CP.19). However, the developed countries were against such a process.

In the draft decision version presented on 9 December by COP21 President Laurent Fabius, there were three options with respect to accelerating the implementation of Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Warsaw decision. These were as follows:

“123. Decides to launch an accelerated implementation process starting in 2016 and continuing until 2020, to give effect to decision 1/CP.19, paragraphs 3 and 4, inter alia, by:

(a) Assessing the progress of the implementation of decision 1/CP.19, paragraph 4;

(b) [Reviewing and] assessing the adequacy of financial, technological and capacity-building support to enable increased mitigation and adaptation ambition by developing country Parties in accordance with decision 1/CP.19, paragraphs 3, 4(e) and 4(f);

(c) Developing and implementing measures to identify and address the adaptation and means of implementation gaps in the pre-2020 period;

(d) Developing ways and means to address the implementation gaps identified in the paragraph 123(c) above in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention;

(e) Sharing experiences, assessing the adequacy and addressing economic diversification as well as the adverse social and economic impacts of response measures on developing country Parties;

123bis. Requests the secretariat to organize the process referred to in paragraph 123 above and disseminate its results;

123ter. Decides that the process referred to in paragraph 123 above should be conducted under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and take place annually until 2020;

Option 2: (paragraph 123)

123. Decides to conduct a facilitative dialogue in conjunction with the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties

(November 2017) with a view to identifying ways to enhance the ambition of mitigation efforts by all Parties, including identifying relevant opportunities to enhance the provision and mobilization of support and enabling environments;

Option 3: (paragraph 123)

123. Decides to conduct biennial facilitative dialogues starting in 2016, through 2020, to assess the progress in implementing decision 1/CP.19, paragraphs 3 and 4, including identifying relevant opportunities to enhance the provision of financial resources, including for technology development and transfer and capacity building;]”

It is clear therefore that in the decision adopted, paragraph 116 is a compromise and instead of an accelerated implementation mechanism, there is a facilitative dialogue instead.

Progress was made on **adaptation** with the following agreed paragraphs:

“125. Decides to launch, in the period 2016-2020, a technical examination process on adaptation;

126. Also decides that the technical examination process on adaptation referred to in paragraph 125 above will endeavour to identify concrete opportunities for strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerabilities and increasing the understanding and implementation of adaptation actions;

127. Further decides that the technical examination process referred to in paragraph

125 above should be organized jointly by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, and conducted by the Adaptation Committee;

128. Decides that the process referred to in paragraph 125 above will be pursued by:

(a) Facilitating the sharing of good practices, experiences and lessons learned;

(b) Identifying actions that could significantly enhance the implementation of adaptation actions, including actions that could enhance economic diversification and have mitigation co-benefits;

(c) Promoting cooperative action on adaptation;

(d) Identifying opportunities to strengthen enabling environments and enhance the provision of support for adaptation in the context of specific policies, practices and actions;

129. Also decides that the technical examination process on adaptation referred to in paragraph 125 above will take into

account the process, modalities, outputs, outcomes and lessons learned from the technical examination process on mitigation referred to in paragraph 110 above

130. Requests the secretariat to support the technical examination process referred to in paragraph 125 above by:

(a) Organizing regular technical expert meetings focusing on specific policies, strategies and actions;

(b) Preparing annually, on the basis of the meetings referred to in paragraph 130(a) above and in time to serve as an input to the summary for policymakers referred to in paragraph 112(c) above, a technical paper on opportunities to enhance adaptation action, as well as options to support their implementation, information on which should be made available in a user-friendly online format;

131. Decides that in conducting the process referred to in paragraph 125 above, the Adaptation Committee will engage with and explore ways to take into account, synergize with and build on the existing arrangements for adaptation-related work

programmes, bodies and institutions under the Convention so as to ensure coherence and maximum value;

132. Also decides to conduct, in conjunction with the assessment referred to in paragraph 120 above, an assessment of the process referred to in paragraph 125 above, so as to improve its effectiveness;

133. Invites Parties and observer organizations to submit information on the opportunities referred to in paragraph 126 above by 3 February 2016.”

A positive outcome was thus the launch of a technical expert process on adaptation. During the inter-sessions in Bonn, Parties had serious differences over the [mandate](#) of workstream 2. While the developed countries said that the mandate of workstream 2 was just mitigation, developing countries said the mandate extends to adaptation and wanted to launch a technical expert process on adaptation under workstream 2.