

Developing country negotiators set out their views on Paris agreement

3 December, Paris (T' Ajit) — Developing countries outlined their expectations of the Paris agreement at a side event organized by South Centre and Third World Network on 30 November during the ongoing twenty-first session of the Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris.

The delegates who spoke at the meeting included Juan Hoffmaister, coordinator of adaptation and loss and damage for 134 countries under the Group of 77 and China (G77 and China), Su Wei (head of the Chinese delegation), Ravi Shankar Prasad (Indian delegation) and Gurdial Singh Nijar, spokesperson of the Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC).

Hoffmaister presented the state of play on adaptation and loss and damage negotiations and also traced the history of how adaptation has been dealt with in the past. The other delegates stressed on the historical responsibility of the developed countries for having caused the problem of climate change and said that the principles and provisions of the Convention should be the bedrock of the Paris agreement. Another common message was that differentiation between developed and developing countries should be reflected in the Paris agreement and decisions.

According to **Su Wei**, it is very important for Paris to reaffirm the very strong message that climate change is an imminent threat to humanity. "It is very important to recall the causes of this problem. It is because of the historic responsibility and accumulation of greenhouse gases by developed countries in 200 years of industrialization, but the impact is on all the human beings of the planet.

"We need to make this effort for an international climate regime, for UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and the process we have developed through Bali, Copenhagen, Durban, Lima and Paris. All these decisions have to be implemented effectively. The objective of Paris is to implement the UNFCCC. It has to be guided by the principles and provisions and common but differentiated responsibilities and

implement the various commitments. That is the objective to enhance the implementation of the Convention," he said.

Su Wei said further that Paris is a very critical juncture in the longer process to address the common challenge of climate change. There is a need to speed up efforts and do what we can to enhance actions that will be implemented after 2020.

"We also need to ensure that all the decisions should be implemented, in particular emphasizing the need, urgency for enhancing the pre-2020 implementation, for mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. Paris needs to resolve the necessary financial support for technology innovation for developing countries," he added.

On the finance commitment of developed countries, Su Wei said that the US \$100 billion a year by 2020 is far from being implemented and that it needs to be done. "The basic facts do not change. The problem has been caused by developed countries. They need to take their historical responsibility into account and take the lead in reducing greenhouse gases, while also honouring their commitments. Differentiation has to be reflected in both process and final outcome in Paris," he stressed.

On the Heads of State and Government event, Su Wei said that the presence of 150 world leaders would give a political momentum to speed up and promote negotiations, "although we recognize there are large differences in the text. After hearing the leaders, the pressure is high on negotiators to find necessary and ambitious solutions here in Paris."

Responding to questions from the media on China's position on loss and damage and long-term goal, Su Wei said that China stands with other developing countries on loss and damage and that it will continue to support those issues.

On long-term goal, he said that there is wide acceptance of the temperature target of well below 2°C to address the challenge of climate change. "What is important for implementing that long-term goal is we

need to reflect our determination and common understanding and real actions. What is important for Paris is to set the world on a more sustainable, climate resilient, low-carbon development path,” he said.

Ravi Shankar Prasad said that India is looking at a just, equitable and ambitious Paris deal. “We have been very consistent that any outcome must be based on the Convention and has to be based on the principles and provisions of the Convention. In this aspect, we are looking at all aspects of the Durban mandate (mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, capacity building and transparency). Principles like common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) must inform these elements,” said Prasad.

Prasad also said that the developing countries’ INDCs (intended nationally determined contributions) are ambitious. “The level of ambition and kind of action that developing countries projected (through the INDCs) is for all of us to see and in many of the analyses we see from the NGOs they have remarked that the projected actions of developing countries are more ambitious and they are on the right track to combat climate change,” he said.

Prasad also said that while the INDCs are not enough to keep the world on a 2°C trajectory, developed countries must take the lead in these efforts. “That is one of the starting points. A large number of developing countries have been taking action. The full incremental cost of climate change actions need to be met by developed countries. And we have come down to figures like US \$100 billion (a year),” he said.

Prasad also commented on a recent report by the OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) that claims that US \$62 billion (in 2014) has been mobilized. “We are not amused by the OECD report (claims) ... It is for anyone to see that these are not new, nor additional. These are not over and above ODA (official development assistance) and there is complete lack of clarity about sources and uses of funds.”

Stressing on the importance of pre-2020 action, Prasad said, “We are very consistent and we want that pre-2020 action must form part of the Paris agreement. We must not let these five years slip by. This must be embedded in Paris. There has to be a revisit mechanism and there has to be amplification of the Kyoto targets. On the means of implementation, the kind of finance, technology and other support that was to be provided needs to be delivered,” he said.

(The second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol for emissions reduction by developed countries in Annex I of the UNFCCC has yet to enter into force due to failure of major developed countries

to ratify the amendment to the Protocol for that purpose.)

Prasad also said that India supports the concept of aggregate global stocktake and how best any gap resulting thereof can be approached.

On the mechanics of what will lead to an agreement in Paris, Prasad said, “The French (COP) President has said that the agreement must be based on climate justice and we must take into account the historical responsibility of the developed countries. He also said that there has to be a financial mechanism for developing countries from developed countries. If this approach is followed, we should have an agreement.”

Responding to questions, Prasad said that India is very much supportive of loss and damage in the Paris agreement. “India has a large coastline and we have a large number of inhabited islands. We face similar problems, which the AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) also face. We need to properly anchor loss and damage in the agreement,” he said.

On the long-term goal, Prasad said that Parties are aware of what was agreed in Cancun (COP16 in 2010). “What paths countries choose will be articulated through their INDCs. These INDCs will give a roadmap in terms of the long-term trajectory for the future. We see the panning out of these paths. We are not supportive of any prescriptions of what these growth paths should be because these are nationally determined.”

Prasad further reiterated that historical responsibility is taking into account the entire spectrum. “It starts from 1850. We are not singling countries here. What individual countries do will be decided by them but the fact that those historically responsible have caused this problem, is indisputable,” said Prasad.

Continuing the conversation further at the side event, **Gurdial Singh Nijar** said that Parties are here to implement the Convention, but there is an attempt to dismantle the fundamental precepts upon which the Convention is based. “There is an attempt to say that CBDR is something of the past. It does not exist. There are signs that economy-wide targets must be shifted over to developing countries. This is disturbing and the consequences are serious. There is a debt that is owed,” he stressed.

Explaining attempts to erode differentiation, Nijar said, “If you look at the provisions, when you look at peaking, developed countries have already peaked. What does that imply? Now it is for developing countries to peak. The atmospheric space has been taken up and now developing countries have to reduce. This means serious consequences for developing countries. If we have to reduce in a drastic way our emissions, we have to cut back in a drastic

way the handling of our communities and issues such as food security. Article 2 of the Convention makes it very clear. You are undermining the construct upon which the Convention is based,” he said.

(Article 2 reads: The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.)

On the importance of means of implementation, Nijar said, “We have to attend to adaptation. There are extreme weather events. That is why we say there has to be means of implementation, which is diluted in the draft Paris agreement. When there is a catastrophe that results in phenomenal deaths and damage, money has to be diverted for that purpose.”

On technology he said that it is in the hands of the developed countries. “Under the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity), there are provisions that IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) must be protected but provided for preferentially or there exist concessional provisions of accessing the IPR, and where necessary the financial mechanism has to fund. Here we have Article 4 of the Convention. Despite that, developing countries have taken on the task of submitting INDCs. Some of them have gone further and have given absolute economy-wide targets,” he said.

(Article 4 operationalises CBDR by setting out the differentiated commitments and obligations of Parties, including the promotion, facilitation and financing of the transfer of, and access to, technology and know-how by developed countries to developing countries.)

Nijar also said that there was no use telling developing countries that the agreement will be durable and let’s be on a journey together, when the starting points for developed and developing countries are different. “This reality has to be embedded,” he stressed, also warning against dividing developing countries with the promise of money. “We heard money will be given to the LDCs (Least Developed Countries). What is the signal that is being sent, that you will carve out a special group among the developing countries? It is not helpful to draft concepts that are alien to the Convention,” he said.

Hoffmaister commented on the treatment meted out to adaptation, pointing out that adaptation has been the forgotten child of the Convention for a very long

time. “There has been general animosity towards wanting to talk about adaptation and it has often meant that when you talk about adaptation, it means no mitigation. The Convention has been trying to catch up. On paper, we have made great advances, but getting to implement those has been a challenge,” he said.

Planning is an imperative for adaptation, but we cannot stop there, Hoffmaister said, adding that resources and general support for adaptation have been lagging behind. Referring to the Copenhagen Conference of Parties, he said that once a COP session closed without the adaptation group being present there. It is not an issue of whether it is more important than mitigation. We have to do both. We need to start paying a lot of attention to adaptation.

“People being affected are very far away from these tables. They have very few resources to do much. The key thing is we want to know where we are going. To just simply say, enhance your resilience is not enough. We need to know what temperature we are adapting to,” he said.

On what is key for adaptation in the Paris agreement, Hoffmaister stressed on the importance of the Cancun Adaptation Framework and the need to anchor existing institutions in the agreement.

“Given the fact that we have moved so little in this process, we want to make sure we don’t erode some of the things we have achieved in the Cancun Adaptation Framework. It contains some remarkable elements. It is helpful to orient global action to adaptation. We are trying to build on so that this agreement will be a plus version of that framework,” he said.

Hoffmaister also said that there is need to go beyond cooperation. There is no choice but to adapt. For adaptation to be left under the multilateral process as a matter of cooperation is simply unacceptable. “We are doing a lot despite limited resources. We have seen this through the INDCs. An incredible number of countries have presented information on adaptation; that should tell us something.

“With the recognition that we need to have assurances that we will communicate that information, that we will be part of the regime, that we won’t be forced to deal with a whole new framework. Countries should have the flexibility to have an adaptation component in INDCs or NAPS (national adaptation plans) or whether they want to communicate what they do,” he said.

Hoffmaister also commented on the meager support given to adaptation. “Support for adaptation has been lagging behind. Of the current climate flows, 11-18 per cent flows to adaptation. It is quite an issue. We are seeing a lot of reluctance to take more concrete steps

to ensure the 50-50 balance between allocation to mitigation and adaptation becomes reality,” he said, On institutions, we want them to continue, said Hoffmaister. “We want assurances of that in the agreement. The LDC Expert group for instance has played a vital role. It finds itself in a humiliating position of justifying its existence every three years. We are tired of that. We want to give leadership to the Adaptation Committee and recognize its role. The role of the Green Climate Fund will help us stay true to the agreement,” he said.

On loss and damage, Hoffmaister said that G77 and China is truly committed and is speaking with one voice. “Not recognizing loss and damage in this agreement is the equivalent of following the path of climate denial. We want to see a mechanism that will evolve, a mechanism that addresses some of the issues that are in the frontlines such as permanent and irreversible losses,” he said.

“There are certain things you cannot adapt to. When your island is under water, when aquifers suffer from saline intrusion, there is nothing you can do. There are slow onset events. We need something to help us address permanent and irreversible losses,” he stressed. Hoffmaister also said that the world would have to deal with the new notion of environmental refugees as a consequence. “We are not prepared to cope with internal displacement. We are not willing to cope with social destabilization,” he said.

Also present at the side-event as speaker was Mariama Williams of South Centre, an intergovernmental organization based in Geneva, who presented her analysis of the OECD report. She pointed to problems such as developed countries not wanting to have a proper definition of climate finance and that they should not be diverting ODA as climate finance. “How do you count loans as climate finance?” she asked.