

Parties voice concern over limited progress in Tianjin climate talks

Tianjin, 12 October (Hilary Chiew and Meena Raman) - Parties at the closing plenary of the 12th session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held on 9 October in Tianjin, China, expressed that there was limited progress in the climate negotiations.

Developing and developed countries also voiced varied expectations for the Cancun meeting of the Conference of Parties in late November this year.

It was clear that deep divisions continued to remain on key issues, especially on mitigation, and developing countries called for greater political will on the part of developed countries for positive outcomes.

The G77 and China and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) also urged developed countries not to hold back progress in the negotiations especially in relation to the establishment of the Climate Fund under the UNFCCC just because developed countries did not get what they want from developing countries in the area of mitigation.

The G77 and China emphasised the need for a comprehensive set of decisions at Cancun that must be in line with the Bali Action Plan, covering all its elements. It also called for balance between the two negotiating tracks (of the AWG-LCA and the Working Group under the Kyoto Protocol on further emissions reduction targets of developed countries), and balance in decisions within each track.

Referring to the need for a balanced outcome on all the elements of the package in Cancun,

Bernarditas Muller of the Philippines, speaking for the G77 and China said that in Tianjin, negotiations on some elements were being held back just because some Parties were not getting what they wanted and this was unfair. (Muller was referring to negotiations on the establishment of a new fund under the UNFCCC which was being held back by the United States as it wanted to see progress on new mitigation obligations for developing countries.)

AOSIS also expressed similar sentiments saying that it was not helpful to hold hostage the establishment of the fund by events elsewhere. It stressed further that the perception of a balance in the Cancun outcome did not include movement in the mitigation block and that AOSIS “was not prepared to play poker”, as the stakes were far too high for them.

Ambassador Abdullah M. Alsaidi of Yemen, speaking on behalf of the **G77 and China**, said that the Group had argued for a comprehensive set of decisions at Cancun and stressed that these decisions must be in line with the Bali Action Plan (BAP), covering all its elements; that a balance between the two negotiating tracks (of the AWG-LCA and the Kyoto Protocol working group) must be respected and the balance in decisions within each track must be maintained. It also stressed that whatever outcome reached in Cancun must not compromise the overall objective of a comprehensive ambitious and legally binding outcome.

The G77 and China said climate change is a universal threat that respects no borders in time or space. It said that its people were suffering and their developmental prospects were at stake, as well as their very existence

jeopardised. It was a matter of life and death for many countries. Therefore, it called for urgency in the negotiations.

The Group said further that it was incumbent on all Parties, particularly the developed countries given their historical responsibility, to address climate change within the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, by adhering to the provisions and principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

It urged Parties to approach Cancun with determination to do more and that the Group has negotiated in good faith notwithstanding impediments to achieve concrete steps necessary for the edifice of a comprehensive and legally binding outcome.

Grenada representing **AOSIS** said that the 16th Conference of the Parties in Cancun later this year must deliver comprehensive and ambitious outcome, rebuild confidence and generate momentum in delivering a tangible result in South Africa in 2011 (at the 17th Conference of Parties).

It said the AWG-LCA process outcome must sit alongside the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and Parties must avoid further uncertainty by addressing the continuation of this architecture in Cancun. It said that while there was some movement in the negotiations in Tianjin, Parties remained deeply divided in many elements of the discussion.

Given the scale and impact of well documented effects of climate change and their consequences, it asked what more was needed to spur them on (to resolve the deadlock). Grenada called for action to match the rhetoric. It said that it was irresponsible, unethical and unjustifiable in failing to meet the challenge demanded by science.

It added that the contours of a balanced package were clear and true leadership was needed. It said that it was not helpful to hold hostage the establishment of the fund under the UNFCCC by events elsewhere.

Grenada said that the perception of balance does not include movement in the mitigation block and that AOSIS was not prepared to

play poker as the stakes are far too high for them.

Lesotho speaking for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) drew attention to the flood in the Hainan province of China where more than 1.6 million people have been affected. It said the magnitude of extreme weather events and their impacts can no longer be over emphasised and with the rise of sea surface temperatures as a result of climate change, the extent of destruction and loss of property and lives can never be imagined.

It reiterated its previous call to have an outcome on a set of decisions that adequately address elements of the BAP to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention now, up to and beyond 2012 which would eventually lead to a legally binding agreement.

It said the set of decisions must include an agreement on the establishment of a new Fund and a decision on a committee that will lead the process to operationalise the Fund. As adaptation was a priority of LDCs, the group underscored the need for the COP to reach agreement on the Adaptation Framework for Implementation and the associated means of support for implementation. This framework should include a process for LDCs to develop medium and long term adaptation plans that build on the NAPAs (National Adaptation Plan of Action).

On capacity building, it said as it is essential for LDCs to fully engage in the implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions, it expects the issue to be addressed. As the best option to adapt is to start mitigating now, the LDCs expect a decision that would enable technology development and transfer. It also hoped that consultations will be carried out in an inclusive, open and transparent manner with the intention of maintaining trust within the UNFCCC process.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, representing the African Group, said that while the work in Tianjin had been instructive, there was much left to be resolved if Parties are to expect an ambitious outcome in Cancun and negotiations are progressing far too slowly

to respond to the needs of developing countries.

It stressed that for the period beyond 2012, the outcome of negotiations must be firstly, a shared vision for long-term cooperative action which includes a global goal for emission reductions, adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology transfer and capacity building in a balanced and comprehensive manner to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention.

Secondly, it said, the agreed outcome of the comprehensive process mandated in the BAP must be a legally binding outcome under the Convention. Thirdly, finance is a cornerstone for achieving a balanced deal that ensures the enhancement of the climate change regime and supports developing countries efforts' to adapt and to take voluntary actions to reduce their emissions as part of the global effort to deal with the issue of climate change.

It expressed its disappointment that there was no clarity on any of these issues and suggested that Parties focus efforts on making progress in several overarching areas:

- that the AWG-LCA take into account the requirements for rationalisation and coherence of the arrangements for the means of implementation, including finance, adaptation, technology and capacity building, and undertake the preparatory work in order to ensure the effective functioning of proposed institutions, mechanisms, procedures and processes.
- Annex I Parties should commit to long term finance based on assessed contributions of 1.5% of GDP and work towards establishing the new fund, including addressing the balance in allocation between adaptation and mitigation
- that the SBSTA (Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technology Advice) develops technical guidance for the implementation of REDD+ (forest related) activities and report to COP17
- the AWG-LCA should focus on clarifying the approach to enhance the ambition of Annex I countries not Party to the Kyoto Protocol (referring to the US) and the issue of

comparability as well design, function and institutional arrangements for the proposed Mitigation Mechanism supporting Non-Annex I countries relative to voluntary nationally appropriate mitigation actions.

Egypt representing 22 countries in the Arab Group said that while there is progress in finance and technology transfer, the session registered regression in the field of adaptation and capacity building. It said that divergences continued over emission reductions. It stressed the need for balance among the various elements of the BAP and in the two tracks of negotiations as well. It expressed concern over elements that are being proposed which are not in the BAP or the Convention. It said that it was important to have a financial mechanism in Cancun and there must be an agreed decision on a standing committee and the establishment of a fund.

Ecuador representing the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) Group (including Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Paraguay) said there has been no significant progress on the negotiating text and called for greater commitment is required from developed countries as without whose political will there could be no outcome. It stressed that there was no room for conditionalities and even less for the prevalence of financial and commercial interests. It said the negotiating process required absolute transparency and the inclusion of all Parties, guided by the UNFCCC. There was need for a legally binding outcome and hoped that Cancun would see a comprehensive set of decisions both in the AWG-LCA and the Kyoto Protocol. It expressed cautious optimism over the outcome in Cancun.

Pakistan was pleased to note progress in the negotiations in Tianjin. It said that it was cognisant that a search for an agreed outcome could take years but this should not lead to complacency. It said that the recent floods in Pakistan posed a new challenge and showed its vulnerability, with the loss of 1,700 lives and effects on 20 million people, with 8 million being made homeless. One-fifth of the country was under water and 2 million hectares of agricultural lands were damaged with loss of property running to billions of

dollars. Pakistan said that there was need to have a more accurate view of the concept of 'vulnerability'.

It said that efforts must be geared up at consolidating the trust built from Copenhagen to Tianjin and Cancun could provide fundamental agreements that could be operationalised, on areas such as institutional arrangements for nationally appropriate mitigation actions of developing countries, REDD-plus framework, climate fund, its framework and principles, technology mechanism and an adaptation framework.

India said that for the further work in Cancun, Parties should stick to certain fundamental principles. First, it said, the outcomes and decisions must be comprehensive and be achieved in both tracks. An outcome on ambitious emissions reduction targets of Annex I Parties is key to success at Cancun. However, India expressed disappointment with the emerging signals as it has not seen willingness to fulfil legal obligations nor was there indication that Parties were anywhere near a comparable and rule-based regime of emissions reduction in the AWG-LCA track.

It said that equity was central to the composition and impact of the work of Parties and there was need to define it operationally with reference to equitable access to global atmospheric resources so that the development prospects of developing countries and the global eradication of poverty are not compromised.

India also said that Parties should avoid selective decisions as all four pillars of the BAP are equally important and critical to a balanced outcome. Balance has to be achieved not only in the two tracks but also in all pillars of the BAP.

Thirdly, it stressed that the nature of the results of the negotiations should not prejudice the agreed outcomes at Cancun. The legal shape of the outcome will be determined not by the form but the substance and the mandate of Parties was not to negotiate a fresh treaty or agreement. It emphasised that the UNFCCC is a legal treaty and the Kyoto Protocol is the legal instrument of the Convention. Whatever Parties choose to do

must only enhance and not alter the principles and provisions of the Convention and the Protocol. Any other approach will not only amount to failure in meeting the existing legal obligations but also damage the credibility of any future legally binding outcomes.

It further stressed that success in Cancun will depend on the comprehensive, transparent and inclusive nature of the consultations which may be necessary in the run up to Cancun.

China said that when it decided to host the climate talks, it was preparing to welcome delegates to Hainan island, which was hit by heavy rains with 1.6 million people being affected, stressing the vulnerability of the country to climate change. It called for urgency and urged all countries, especially the developed countries to do something real and commit to emission reduction targets and provide technology transfer to developing countries. China stressed that the Convention and the BAP as the basis for the outcome in Cancun. There was need for balance in both negotiating tracks and within the various elements.

Marshall Islands chided Parties who remained cynical about fast-start finance. It said that it was caught in the middle of a downward spiral of the negotiations. To build a balanced and practical outcome, it said more work should be in crystalising mitigation targets, up-scaling of actions and advancing international consultations and analysis and MRV (measuring, reporting and verification of actions).

Singapore said that references to concepts such as the equitable sharing of atmospheric space were not helpful and it could not find convergence in the selective definition of the principle of equity.

Belgium speaking for the European Union said it could not but feel that this session (in Tianjin) did not live up to its expectations in terms of progress and of striking the right balance. It said that progress was simply too limited for some of the topics that are crucial to achieving a balanced package. In particular, it said Parties have not progressed enough on mitigation, MRV and market approaches

which are essential elements for the EU in terms of a balanced package for Cancun.

The EU wanted all countries' pledges to be reflected in the UNFCCC process and there was need initiate discussions to clarify them and to consider options for strengthening the collective level of ambition which remains insufficient in light of our 2 degree Celsius goal. It also stressed that this was without prejudice to the ongoing discussions on the further commitments under the Kyoto Protocol track and did not also mean that the EU would accept a pledge-and-review approach for Annex I Parties.

The EU sought to set up a framework for enhanced MRV taking into account the different responsibilities and capabilities of developed and developing countries as well as the different nature of their commitments. On market approaches, it said, although there was support from most Parties for progressing on this issue which is important for delivering results on mitigation, it wanted clarity in the text on key principles and to launch a work programme.

It said that during consultations, it became clear that many Parties were concerned that decisions on mitigation could move Parties away from the objective of a legally binding outcome for the AWG-LCA. The EU affirmed that it aimed for no less than a legally binding outcome for the Convention track and the Cancun outcome will have to define next steps to reach this goal.

The EU said that progress was achieved on the setting up of the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund and constructive decisions also took place on the Adaptation Framework, the technology mechanism, capacity building and their institutional arrangements and Parties are also closer to setting up the REDD-plus mechanism (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries etc.) but said much remained to be done to complete the work in Cancun. It counted on the Mexican government to create a sound environment for a focused political discussion to resolve the main outstanding issues.

Australia speaking for the Umbrella Group said it supported a durable, fair and effective legally binding outcome which includes the contribution by all major emitters. The Group affirmed support for the Copenhagen Accord which it said provided guidance on all elements of the Bali Action Plan. It said that a balanced package of decisions will allow progress towards an agreement.

It said the package should include elements on mitigation and MRV both for developed and developing countries. There was good progress on finance, adaptation and REDD-plus but progress on mitigation and MRV was limited.

It added that for a balanced outcome in Cancun, decisions on mitigation and MRV must be detailed and operational. The mitigation pledges of both developed and developing countries should be affirmed and it would also like new and updated pledges and begin a process for understanding these pledges. It wanted the pledges in appendices and said that the Accord provided guidance on this. In addition, a registry would provide avenue for developing countries to seek support for their actions. It said that transparency was key and there was need for a robust framework for MRV and ICA which decisions on frequency, form and content for transparency post 2012.

Australia said that a package of decisions must be a package and not a list of individual elements.

The **United States** said that there was limited progress in Tianjin and there must be progress on all elements. On mitigation, it said that it tried to be flexible so could move forward in a differentiated manner on (mitigation) activities (between developed and developing countries). It expressed sadness that the notes by the facilitators on mitigation had not status. It said that there was need for time for key issues to ensure a balanced package.