

COP stock-take reveals problem areas for political resolution by ministers

Warsaw, 20 November (Hilary Chiew) – At the informal stock-taking plenary held on 18 Nov under the Warsaw climate talks, the President of the UNFCCC's 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 19), Marcin Korolec (the Environment Minister of Poland) said Ministers will provide the necessary political resolution to enable several key issues to advance.

Ministers have arrived from around the world and the high level segment commenced afternoon of 19 Nov.

Korolec informed Parties that one issue that could not be resolved at the technical level is 'Loss and Damage.' He said that while the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the current co-facilitators on the issue are undertaking some additional technical work, he has asked the two ministers to lend him support in dealing with this issue, who are Minister Edna Molewa from South Africa, and Minister Lena Margareta Ek from Sweden.

He said the Chairs of the SBI and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) informed him of those issues that they believed cannot be resolved at the technical level.

"I would like to mention in particular the item on Finance as requiring special attention. The finance negotiators have been working hard and have made significant progress in the first week. I encourage them to continue the efforts and to focus on the issues that can and need to be concluded here, in Warsaw, said Korolec.

He invited the Chairs of SBI and SBSTA and the Co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Actions (ADP) to provide updates on the status of the work in their respective bodies.

SBSTA Chair Richard Muyungi (Tanzania) said SBSTA 39 successfully concluded on Sunday morning (17 November) and added that many mandated issues were completed which would contribute to the work of other bodies and lay the ground for years to come.

Unfortunately, he said, the session was unable to conclude on three items – institutional arrangements for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus) (which is a joint SBI/SBSTA item); Response Measures forum and work programme (also a joint SBI/SBSTA item); and methodological issues related to the Kyoto Protocol's Articles 5, 7 and 8. These items are transmitted to the COP for further guidance and consideration.

He also said there was no progress in two other agenda items – joint report of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), and the new market and non-market mechanisms, and the latter will be deferred to the June SBSTA session in Bonn next year. The technology issue will be transmitted to the COP President for consideration.

SBI Chair Tomasz Chruszczow (Poland) informed that the SBI had just closed (before the COP plenary convened). (The SBI session reconvened in the morning of 18 Nov after it was suspended in the early hours of Sunday, 17 Nov due to lack of quorum.)

Despite having to deal with many politically-sensitive issues, he was pleased to inform that the SBI made very important steps in the direction of completing the building of the institutional arrangements that are crucial for COP decisions. He described agreement on the modalities and

procedures of the CTCN and its Advisory Board as putting the final brick in the construction of the Technology Mechanism.

However, Chruszczow noted that there are items to be further considered by the COP President, i.e. REDD-plus institutional arrangements; Response Measures forum and work programme; loss and damage; and the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

On implementation of the Technology Mechanism, he concurred with Muyungi that there are diverging views on the need to continue the consideration of the issue in the 40th session of the Subsidiary Bodies based on paragraph 16 of the rules of procedure, and on calling on the COP President to find the right space to consider the reports to the COP.

Co-chair of the ADP, Arthur Runge-Metzger reported that during the course of the first week's meeting, Parties have been able to cover the entire ground of the workplan of the ADP and had deep discussions on all the points in raising ambition and on elements for a 2015 Agreement. He said a stock-taking plenary was convened on 16 Nov (Saturday) and that Co-chairs had provided the basis to capture progress in a draft decision and conclusions which was presented on 18 Nov to Parties, who have been sent to do more work before reconvening in the afternoon to present their feedback.

Korolec invited Party groupings to speak.

Fiji speaking for the Group of 77 and China said the Group holds a strong position (on certain issues) and hopes to further conversation on those that had been transmitted to the COP Presidency. Noting the high-level segment this week, it stressed that equal time should be allocated to address outstanding issues.

Bangladesh speaking for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) regretted that we did not complete the work on the international mechanism for loss and damage which is very important for LDCs and other developing

countries. It requested the dynamism of the COP President and his two co-facilitators to thrash out the issue so that the international mechanism for loss and damage can be launched in Warsaw. It also expressed concern that the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 could not be completed (under the SBI). It called for a balance in the budget for both mitigation and adaptation issues especially adequate support for LDCs so that their representation at meetings can be ensured.

Nauru representing the Alliance of Small Island States looked forward to the high-level segment to advance progress on outstanding issues and an ambitious work plan from the ADP as well as a decision on loss and damage.

Switzerland representing the Environmental Integrity Group said the Warsaw COP is crucial in advancing the 2015 Agreement and it is important for this COP to lay the foundation for the rules-based system for all Parties. It said there are constructive proposals on the table on which Parties should work in a focussed and constructive manner. It further called on the continuation of work

Australia representing the Umbrella Group said the COP must send a strong signal that the ADP is on track to take effect from 2020, stressing that mitigation commitments from all Parties will be central to the credibility and lasting value of the new Agreement.

The European Union expressed concerns over the lack of outcome on the UNFCCC's programme budget and called for conclusions here so Parties can continue to work without interruption and hoped the emerging areas in the ADP process will yield results. (See TWN Update 12 for further details).

In conclusion, Korolec said he planned to conduct another informal stock-take in the next few days.