

Climate talks at risk of delivering nothing

Warsaw, 22 Nov (Meena Raman and Zhenyan Zhu) – At an informal stock-taking plenary of the UNFCCC's Conference of Parties, convened late evening on Thursday 21 November, China warned that the Warsaw climate talks were on the verge of delivering virtually nothing.

It expressed solidarity with over 800 representatives of leading non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social movements who had around lunch time on Thursday, walked out of the Warsaw Stadium, the venue of the climate talks, saying that the talks were on track to deliver virtually nothing. The walkout included Friends of the Earth International, Greenpeace International, WWF, Oxfam International, the International Trade Union Confederation, Actionaid, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, LDC Watch, the Philippines Movement on Climate Change and the Bolivian Platform on Climate Change.

“While still cherishing the last hope to make Warsaw a successful climate Conference,” China’s lead negotiator Suwei said he fully understood why there was a walkout. He said “the Warsaw talks which should have been an important step forward in the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, is now on the verge of delivering virtually nothing”.

“Even worse, the moves of many developed countries are directly undermining the UNFCCC itself; when one major developed country Party announced that it was backtracking on emission cut commitments previously made, and another developed country Party gave multiple signals that it was utterly unwilling to take the UN climate process seriously, the integrity of the talks was further jeopardized.”

Referring to a Ministerial dialogue on climate finance held on 20 November in Warsaw, Suwei said the ‘finance ministerial’ showed “almost no actual finance” and the “loss and damage talks

that have stalled because developed countries refuse to engage on the substance of an international mechanism.” He added that “Warsaw has not seen any increase in emission reductions nor increased support for adaptation before 2020 – on these things it has actually taken the process backward.” He expressed China’s strong disappointment over the backtracking by developed countries from their commitments on mitigation ambition and finance.

On the side-lines of the talks, Indian Environment Minister Jayanthi Natarajan said that she had heard that a large number of NGOs have walked out protesting against the inaction of the developed countries in combatting climate change and blocking progress in many important areas in the ongoing Conference of Parties in Warsaw.

Natarajan expressed India’s “deep concern that there has been absolutely no progress in any of the issues of interest to developing countries in this COP. Discussions on crucial issues of direct importance to developing countries like finance, technology and loss and damage have remained deadlocked due to lack of will by developed country Parties. This comes in the backdrop of some developed countries actually reneging on their commitments or decreasing them. I fully share the sentiments of the NGOs and call on developed countries to show their determination to implement commitments and increase their ambition to address the mitigation gap and provide enhanced means of implementation and ensure that the negotiations reach a meaningful conclusion in the COP.”

At the informal stock-taking session on Thursday, the COP President (Polish Minister Marcin Korolec) gave an update on several outstanding issues and also invited Ministers who were facilitating the consultations on loss and damage as well as the Co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Action

(ADP) to provide information on the progress of the negotiations.

On the issue of loss and damage, two ministers, Edna Molewa (South Africa) and Lena Margareta Ek (Sweden) conducted several ministerial bilaterals throughout the day. Molewa said consultations were still going on and “progress was made to close the gap in divergences” and added that the issue would need more time to conclude. She emphasized the importance of showing to the world that this Convention cares for those affected by loss and damage and this signal can only be fulfilled by a decision to establish an institutional arrangement to address loss and damage. She was confident that Parties can find a landing zone.

On Long-term Finance, the COP President informed Parties that he will convene an open-ended ministerial consultation on Friday morning (22 November) to present the results. “If we manage to complete the issue of finance, we have major success in Warsaw,” said Korolec.

On the issue of matters regarding the methodological issues related to Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Kyoto Protocol, the COP President informed Parties that the matter had been concluded. On Wednesday, 20 November, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Science and Technological Advice (SBSTA) informed Parties that more time was needed in Warsaw to continue outstanding work. If Parties are not able to finish this work here, the issues will be referred to SBSTA 40 (in 2014). The SBSTA Chair Richard Muyungi (Tanzania) said that the absence of agreement will have implications for the reporting process of the second commitment period (CP 2) of the Kyoto Protocol.

At the informal stock-take on Thursday, the **European Union** said this was a very important issue for them and more work was needed to finalize an outcome. The rules to establish the assigned amounts are essential so that the CP2 can be ratified.

On the issue of response measures, the COP President said that an outcome is needed by Friday and progress will be provided on consultations by the facilitator of this issue today. Developing countries want a mechanism to address the negative impacts of response measures undertaken to address climate change.

Another critical issue that remains unresolved is the UNFCCC Secretariat’s programme budget for 2014-2015. The COP President said that the co-

facilitators on this issue reported that intense discussions were still on-going.

On the work of the ADP, Co-Chair Arthur Runge-Metzger (EU) reported that Parties were busy providing suggestions to improve the decision text and conclusions for the ADP. (The Co-chairs had issued a second draft text on 20 November which saw substantial and intense discussions. A revised text is expected this morning for further feedback). The ADP was supposed to close on Thursday, 21 November but that will now happen on Friday.

At the conclusion of the informal stock-take yesterday, **Fiji on behalf of G77 and China** reiterated the importance of transparency and efficiency in the process and did not want a revisit or reopening of decisions already agreed to in the subsidiary bodies and working groups.

These remarks were prompted in an apparent reference to attempts by some developed country Parties (at an informal stock-take session of the COP on Wed 20 November), to revive the issue of market mechanisms, but this was countered by some developing countries that stressed that a decision had already been taken by SBSTA to resume discussion on this issue only in June 2014 because no agreement could be reached in Warsaw.

The fight over the revival of the market mechanism issue for a possible decision at the level of the COP, after its lack of agreement at the SBSTA, was one of the highlights of the Wednesday 20 November) stock-take plenary.

Given that there was no consensus on new market mechanism (NMM) and non-market approaches (NMA), the SBSTA agreed to forward the issues to SBSTA 40. Some Parties sought to re-open the discussion of this issue in COP 19 on the grounds of essential importance of market to enhance emission reduction, while other Parties expressed their caution against market mechanisms and preferred to follow the decision made in SBSTA deferring the issue to SBSTA 40.

Among those countries that raised the NNM/NMA issue during the stock-take plenary and wanted further consideration of the issue in Warsaw were **Switzerland** on behalf of **Environmental Integrity Group**, the **EU**, and **Australia** on behalf of the **Umbrella Group**. This was countered by **Bolivia** and **Venezuela** who stressed that the SBSTA had already agreed to defer this matter for consideration at its next

session in June 2014, as there was no consensus in Warsaw on the matter.

The COP 19 and the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 9) are expected to close today, Friday, 22 November. With many critical issues

remaining contentious and awaiting resolution, it is unclear if the talks will end on time or will spill over to the following day, as has been the experience at past COP meetings.