

Review: Developed countries determined to narrow scope

Bonn, 9 June (Hilary Chiew) – Parties clashed over the scope of the “2013-2015 Review” and the source of scientific information at the first workshop on the review on 5 June.

Developing countries stressed that the review should not focus only on the adequacy of the 2°C long-term global goal (LTGG) but also on an assessment of the overall progress that includes the implementation of the commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Developed countries, however, refused to consider the latter, describing the inclusion of discussion on the means of implementation as duplicating the work undertaken elsewhere under the Convention.

[Decision 1/CP.18 adopted by the Conference of Parties (COP) in Doha in 2012 defined the scope of the review in paragraph 79:

Decides that the review should periodically assess, in accordance with the relevant principles and provisions of the Convention, the following:

(a) The adequacy of the long-term global goal in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention;

*(b) Overall progress made towards achieving the long-term global goal, **including a consideration of the implementation of the commitments under the Convention**; ... (Emphasis added).]*

Parties also have different views on the source of scientific information for the 2013-2015 Review. Developing countries argued that inputs from sources other than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) should be acceptable while developed countries raised concern of the robustness of non-IPCC inputs.

The goal of the 5 June workshop jointly convened by the Subsidiary Body for

Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) under the Structured Expert Dialogue is “to increase the understanding of existing scientific knowledge and how it could be used to address the two themes of the review: the adequacy of the LTGG in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention; and overall progress made towards achieving the LTGG, including a consideration of the implementation of the commitments under the Convention”.

(The Doha COP set up a joint contact group of the SBI and SBSTA to assist the COP in conducting the review, with support from expert consideration of inputs from workshops, etc. to start at the 38th session of the two subsidiary bodies, through a structured expert dialogue under the guidance of the SBI and SBSTA. The 38th session is ongoing in Bonn from 3 to 14 June.)

Earlier, SBSTA Chair Richard Muyungi (Tanzania) informed that the secretariat had received six submissions from Parties on the matter which have been taken into account in the planning of the workshop.

He also said the non-Annex 1 (developing countries) Parties had selected Professor Zou Ji of China to be the co-facilitator for the Structured Expert Dialogue but there was no nomination from Annex 1 Parties.

The two themes of the workshop were decided based on the Doha outcome (through decision 1/CP.18), where it was agreed that “the Review should periodically assess in accordance with the relevant principles and provisions of the Convention” the two aspects in paragraph 79.

Theme 1 aimed to present and discuss possible ways to assess the adequacy of the LTGG by

using various sources of information. This part of the workshop started with introductory presentations by experts providing the status of the global climate; overview of the contribution of each working group and of the synthesis report of the IPCC assessment reports and their possible use in the review; and the 2°C target and associated climate risks.

Theme 2 explored the possible use of relevant information for the review based on the discussions that have been carried out to date on emission reduction commitments toward the LTGG and on means of implementation. This part of the workshop started with introductory presentations summarizing the previous discussions under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA), the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) and the subsidiary bodies on the level of ambition and on means of implementation.

Parties then intervened with 3 guided questions.

In its presentation under Theme 2, **China** said the Review provides opportunities to learn from past lessons in addressing climate change and that it could provide useful input to the ADP mandate. It said many institutions were established after Cancun (COP 17) and there is a need for them to perform their functions in a coherent manner.

China stressed that the Review should not be limited to scientific information but should also be based on the knowledge of the implementation. The principles of the Review can never be overestimated particularly in the planning stage.

We do not want it to be a finger-pointing exercise, stressed China, adding that one important aspect is that it is not a review of the Convention but Parties need to assess what have been done, learn the lessons and move forward.

It said China shared the concerns of many developing countries of limiting the Review to just the LTGG of 2°C, emphasising the need to include the broader discussion on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity-building. It also wanted to assess the adequacy of Annex 1 mitigation as required by science and historical responsibility and the socio-economic impacts from the

implementation of response measures by developed countries.

It emphasised that the Review is a Party-driven process that should provide balance and comprehensiveness.

On the information sources for the Review, it said comprehensive and balanced information should not just be scientific knowledge but real practice and that the IPCC is not the only source of information.

The Philippines presented that it would like to see the link of the Review to the central role of the UNFCCC with a view towards assessing if the 2°C goal is adequate and if Parties can meet the objectives of Article 2 of the Convention.

(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.”*)

It said Parties should therefore look at all the elements that should go into the framework of the Review and look at gaps, incentives and barriers.

It said Parties need to assess if the 2°C target is enough or should be stronger, adequacy of the adaptation cost, assistance by Annex 1 Parties, comparability of the adequacy, support for indigenous technologies and how developing countries are doing their part. It should also include assessment of the implementation of Article 2 and implementation of the commitments of Parties.

New Zealand representing Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway and the United States said the Review process is very important in this transition period when Parties can take stock, look to the past and make sure to take a robust policy for the future where the greatest challenge is to keep temperature rise to 2°C or lower.

Besides holding temperature increase below 2°C, it said other relevant considerations include aggregate greenhouse gas, aggregate mitigation

commitment of Parties, the evolving economic circumstances and capabilities of Parties.

It said the Review is a clear platform for reinforcing science in addressing climate change and that it must enjoy the trust of Parties. Towards this end, it said the IPCC 5th Assessment Report is the foundation for the Review which should not be undermined.

It warned against inclusion of input that are not robust and that reports must be objective and provide a balanced conclusion.

The **United States** responded that it would like to “start the Review now and start it correct”. It noted its view that Parties made the Review narrow in scope so that it is not all things to all people.

It is concerned to hear that we do in fact want to review the Convention itself, asking China and the Philippines how they see that the proposal they had made about broadening the scope does not contradict their assertion that the Review is not about reviewing the Convention.

It also expressed concern over Parties stressing the distinction between Annex 1 (A1) and non-Annex (NA1) Parties, adding that the US recognised that it must do more but “again as China said pointing the finger is not going to get us there”.

The European Union said the 2°C is the global goal and it is important for Parties to maintain the global picture and that Parties do not duplicate the work undertaken elsewhere under the Convention.

Agreeing with the EU on maintaining the global picture, **Japan** asked China how do Parties avoid the risk of including information that may not have the scientific robustness.

New Zealand said the workshop is to kick-off the 2-year process. As this is a fact-finding process, finger-pointing is not useful.

It also said the Review needs to be based on robust information that can be trusted by all Parties, stressing that IPCC is the foundation of the Review.

In reply, **China** said the Doha decision is clear that the Review is not about the Convention but about the implementation of the Convention and commitments of Annex 2 Parties in terms of finance and technology transfer. The

differentiation of A1 and NA1 is the foundation of the Convention.

The Philippines acknowledged that it is important to focus on the global picture but the picture is made up of different pictures. It agreed that Parties should not duplicate their work but it is important to get inputs from other processes to feed into the Review.

Referring to paragraph 79 of Decision 1/CP.18, it said it is clear that it is not asking for a review of the Convention which would mean to look at the principles and provisions but the scope of the review clearly provides for differentiation between A1 and NA1.

What we said here is perfectly consistent with what we said in Doha, it stressed.

Brazil agreed with China that the Review is not limited to the scientific aspect as the Doha decision includes implementation of commitments under the Convention of which the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is the most important. It said the LTGG is not considered in isolation and appreciated the Philippines’ presentation as an interesting approach to be considered for the Review.

It said China and the Philippines had put concrete question about the need for the Review to take a holistic approach. It also questioned the absence of expert presentations for Theme 2.

Botswana speaking for the African Group said when Parties look at progress, they would also want assessment of the provision of the means of implementation. It said developing countries’ abilities to contribute is incumbent on the means of implementation.

It was supported by **Saudi Arabia** and **Ethiopia**.

Earlier under the discussion of Theme 1, **China** expressed its concern over limiting information sources to the IPCC assessment reports. It pointed out that due to the IPCC deadline for publications to be used as raw materials in the assessment reports, this will exclude many most updated materials which may provide critical information for the analysis and assessment of scientific aspects of climate change.

Furthermore, many publications that are not in the English language and do not go through the peer review process, most of which from

developing countries, can hardly contribute to the IPCC assessment process. Therefore, Parties should address critical information from developing countries here in the review process.

It said IPCC is one of the important inputs to the review, but definitely not the only source. The information source of review should be comprehensive, flexible and balanced.

In considering not to duplicate the work undertaken by IPCC and not reopening the findings of IPCC, as well as the common understanding of not referencing the conclusions of IPCC AR5 before it is released, Parties should focus on the information other than IPCC at this stage to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process.

With regard to the adequacy of 2°C goal, Parties may need to do some technical work on the information regarding the context of the LTGG,

such as social and economic consequences of the LTGG, the impact on developing countries and the incremental mitigation and adaptation costs of the developing countries due to the adverse effect of the 2°C temperature rise. It suggested looking into the materials at the regional and national level, like national communications, national progress reports on climate change, taking full account of the material from developing countries institutions.

Theme 1 saw the presentations from the World Meteorological Organisation, the IPCC and Hadley Centre.

In closing, Prof Zou Ji said an informal summary of the workshop for possible consideration by the joint Contact Group of SBI and SBSTA will be prepared.