

Annex 1 pledges insufficient, developing countries doing more

Bangkok, 5 April (Meena Raman) – Developing countries and several developed countries agreed that the current pledges for emission reductions by developed countries is insufficient to limit the temperature rise to 2 degree C.

This was one of the conclusions of the pre-session workshop held on 3 April in Bangkok under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the emission reductions targets by developed country Parties.

Presentations by the G77 and China, the Alliance of Small Island States, India and Bolivia showed that the level of ambition among developed countries was far too low and there was grave need for deeper cuts and targets.

The European Union and Switzerland also agreed that there was need to increase the ambition level of the developed countries (See separate article on developed country pledges for further details).

A presentation by Bolivia at the workshop revealed that the pledges of developing countries showed that they were contributing more to the abatement efforts than the developed countries.

The G77 and China stressed the importance of the Kyoto Protocol as the reference for comparability of effort among developed countries and the level of ambition. For the G77 and China, without reference to this, it was difficult to see the international regime move forward and this would amount to a watering down of the global effort.

The Group also raised the issue of the extent of reliance by developed countries on offsets. It said that if developing countries have to do their own mitigation actions and a significant or majority of that is for developed countries' mitigation (in terms of offsets), this turns the principle of common but

differentiated responsibility on its head and is problematic from an equity standpoint.

India, in presenting a carbon budget approach to mitigation, said that the unilateral claims of the developed countries through weak pledges amounted to unilateral appropriation of the development space of developing countries.

The co-facilitator of the workshop, Mr. Richard Muyungi, summarized some key issues raised at the workshop. He said that there was a recognition of the gap in the ambition level in keeping the temperature limit to a 2 degree C rise. There was need to do more. Many developed countries have de-coupled emissions from economic growth. The issue of land-use and land use change and forestry (LULUCF) was important in understanding the targets. There was a lively discussion on adequacy and comparability of efforts and the need for an international rules-based system. There was need to clarify what is the role of LULUCF, accounting rules and level of domestic actions and the scope of offsetting. There was need to relate work here to the Kyoto Protocol.

Brazil, for the **G77 and China** said that the assumptions and conditions in the framing the pledges and targets need to be clarified. It said that it was essential to consider the conversions of pledges into quantified emission limitation and reduction objective (QELRO) with a common base year and a common start year for (emissions reduction) commitment periods. The definition period of the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol is also key for clarity.

Other topics for clarification include the counting of carbon, modalities for measurement of emissions and removals of (carbon) sinks.

Brazil said that the target number does not translate to stringency or contribution of a Party to the global

effort, and there was need for consideration of LULUCF and how emissions from forests are treated.

In the definition of the pledge, Brazil said that it was essential to know how strong the commitment is. What is the nature and use of offsets? Parties have seen ideas for different kinds of offsets, some domestic instruments and some international. This was not just an issue of clarity but an issue of equity as well. What is the domestic effort within the pledge in the context of low domestic effort and reliance on offsets by developed countries? If developing countries have to do their own mitigation actions and a significant or majority of that is for developed countries' mitigation (in terms of offsets), this turns the principle of common but differentiated responsibility on its head and is problematic from an equity standpoint, said Brazil.

Brazil also said that there was need to move from diversity of efforts to a comparability of efforts.

There is recognition of the need to enhance ambition (as regards emissions reductions). Comparability and ambition work hand in hand and are strongly determined by the assumptions underlying the pledges. The rules must be rigorous and defined internationally. A bottom-up approach through national determination of rules for measuring carbon and use of offsets does not generate a comparable structure.

Brazil stressed that for the G77 and China, the Kyoto Protocol reference for comparability and ambition is key. Without reference to this, it is difficult to see the international regime move forward. Otherwise, it was a watering down of global effort.

Brazil said that the pledges so far are not sufficient for a limiting temperature level to 2 degree C and enhancement was necessary.

It said that there was need to gain, as a result of the workshop, a clear notion of what would be the aggregate mid-term target of the Annex 1 Parties (developed countries), as this was not the case so far. There was need for discussion of this fully and of how compliance would be ensured of the mitigation commitments.

India said that the correct framework for mitigation to be addressed is equity. Sustainability must be limited to acceptable levels of a 2 degree C temperature level without prejudice to a review of this temperature limit. This implies a carbon budget for the world. For 2010 to 2050 only 300 Giga tone of

carbon (GtC) is allowed for the world (which has a 50% of mean probability of staying below 2 degree C). The global carbon budget has implications and there is need for a paradigm for equitable access to sustainable development. Carbon budgets cannot be distributed inequitably. Between 1970 and 2009, Annex 1 Parties contributed to 66% of the cumulative emissions.

Unilateral claims through weak pledges amount to unilateral appropriation of development space, said India. If Annex 1 countries do not restrict their budget, then developing countries get less. The lower the pledges of developed countries, the lower the carbon space for developing countries.

With a carbon budget of 300 GtC, the cumulative emission pledges on the lower limits of Annex 1 would be 96.34 GtC and what is left for non-Annex 1 would be 203.7 GtC and if the upper limit of the pledges taken, then Annex 1 would have 91.45 GtC and what is left for non-Annex 1 would be 208.6 GtC. Based on the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Fourth Assessment, taking the higher cuts needed for Annex 1 Parties, the Annex 1 Parties should have 44.33 GtC and what is left for non-Annex 1 is 255.67 GtC.

India said that there was need for a radical increase of ambition levels on the part of the Annex 1 countries. In the fight for equitable access, the real picture of the carbon budget relates to future entitlements for Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries from 2010 to 2050. For non-Annex 1 countries, the future entitlement amounts to 425 GtC. For the Annex 1 countries, there is an over-occupation of the carbon space and hence there is a negative entitlement of minus 125 GtC based on 2009 population.

India emphasized that equitable access has to be at the centre of negotiations. Sustainable development is necessary and needs far deeper cuts from developed countries. The gap between the entitlement and what is the available carbon space provides the scientific benchmark that developing countries must obtain. The portion of carbon budget available to non-Annex 1 countries is 255 GtC.

India said that entitlements of this kind provide a much firmer basis and benchmark for financial resources and technology transfer. Equitable access and equity should be the centre of the climate discourse and provide the basis for what the world has to do.

In response to India, the **US** said that it was pessimistic about equitable access and that it was dubious that equitable access to sustainable development can be equated to atmospheric space. US said further that adopting a cumulative approach is backward looking.

India in reply said that the cumulative emissions approach is not backward but looks to the future. The US Academy of Sciences also looked at the carbon budget approach rather than looking at sinks and sources of emissions and said that the carbon budget approach is a viable policy planning tool. Historical responsibility is an issue and concerns the sharing of finite resources. In the context of mitigation, sustainability is about living with finite resources and equitable access to a finite resource is central to climate change.

Bolivia, referring to work by the Stockholm Environment Institute and UNEP on the abatement of emissions in a 2 degree C scenario, said that the gap in abatement is 7.4 to 5.3 Gt of CO₂ equivalent. This can lead the world to a 4 to 5 degree C increase in global temperature. Looking at the emission pledges on the table, developing countries are going to be doing more emission reductions than developed countries (54% vs. 46% in the lower end of the pledges and 57% vs. 45% in the higher end of the pledges). The offsets by developed countries can be 16% of the global nominal pledges and because of the offsets, the abatement can only be 5.5 Gt. of CO₂ equivalent for the lower end of the pledges of developed countries. The gap in abatement will be higher because of offsets at 8.5 Gt. CO₂ equivalent.

With offsets of developed countries, developing countries will do even more effort than developed countries with developing countries doing 65% while developed countries only contributing to 35%.

The **EU** agreed with Bolivia that the level of ambition was not enough. It expressed interest in the figures.

The Alliance Of Small Island States (AOSIS) stressed the urgency of emissions reductions with sea-level rise of more than 1 meter by 2100 being likely.

On the scale of ambition for emissions reduction, a gap remains between pledges on the table and what is needed to limit the temperature rise consistent with 1.5 degree C and 2 degree C. It said that the global

emissions gap for 2020 is 5 to 9 GtCO₂ equivalent a year if the (2010) Cancun decision pledges are fully implemented. The cost of closing the gap is manageable at 0.4% of the GDP in 2020.

AOSIS said that the Annex 1 pledges deliver only 1% to 7% reduction from 1990 levels. A reduction of 6% in emissions can be achieved close to zero cost. Annex 1 countries need to undertake a further 2 to 3 GtCO₂ equivalent per year reductions by 2020. It said that some countries like the US, Canada and Australia are actually reducing their pledges and some countries are deeply relying on offsets.

According to AOSIS, a 20% to 40% reductions by Annex 1 Parties cost approximately 0.1-1.5% of Annex 1 GDP in 2020. It said that the lack of ambition is a fundamental problem.

The **US** challenged the AOSIS data and said that it did not believe those assumptions and said that faulty data is being used. It said that if Parties were going to have a process to assess the performance of countries, there was need to solicit inputs of countries on those assumptions.

Solomon Islands said that it will be useful to have a standard format in relation to the pledges of the developed countries. It said the current pledges show more suffering in developing countries if there is no ratcheting up of pledges.

Tuvalu said that it was widely recognized that the developed country pledges were gravely inadequate.

Switzerland agreed with the G77 and China that the Kyoto Protocol can be a reference for comparison (of efforts). It said that the Kyoto Protocol has to be improved on the coverage of gases and its rules.

The EU agreed with the Brazil that there is overall insufficiency of ambition in relation to the pledges and a need to address the problem of accounting rules.

Brazil, speaking for the G77 and China in response to a question said that there is space for improvements to the Kyoto Protocol but it has to be in the direction to enhance environmental integrity. For a solid basis for improvements, it should be defined internationally, which is top-down and not from a bottom-up approach.