

## Agenda for working group on long-term cooperation adopted

Penang, 11 April (Meena Raman\*) –After an intense two and half days of negotiations, the agenda for the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted in Bangkok late evening on the final day of the meeting on 8 April.

Ambassador Jorge Arguello of Argentina, representing the **Group of 77 and China** said that the Group had tabled a draft agenda (on Tuesday, 5 April) that became the basis for negotiations and led to the adoption of the agenda on the final day.

“This agenda was the fruit of many hours of intensive discussions and engagement, and was structured to address all the building blocks of the Bali Action Plan as well as the elements of the Cancun decision in a balanced and comprehensive manner,” said Arguello.

The developed countries led by the United States had wanted an agenda that would only implement the decisions adopted in Cancun on the AWG-LCA outcome. The G77 and China argued that this would be a selective choice of issues and insisted that the mandate of the negotiations was still the Bali Action Plan, adopted in Bali in December 2007, which launched the Working Group and the current negotiations.

Behind the battle over the agenda was really a fight over what the final deal in Durban (at the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting Conference of Parties in December 2011) will contain. According to the developing countries, many key issues (such as the adequacy of emissions reduction commitments of all developed countries, including the US; the need to avoid trade protectionism on climate grounds; the issue of patents

and technology transfer) were not resolved in Cancun and should be included in this year’s climate talks.

At the last hours in Bangkok, the developing countries won the agenda battle. It was agreed that the Bali Action Plan would remain as the framework for the future talks.

It was agreed that the agenda would address the following:

*“Preparation of a comprehensive and balanced outcome to be presented to the Conference of the Parties for adoption at its seventeenth session to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action now, up to and beyond 2012, pursuant to the results of the thirteenth (the 2007 Bali decision) and sixteenth (the 2010 Cancun decision) sessions of the Conference of the Parties and recognizing that the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention includes both implementation tasks and issues that are still to be concluded...”*

On the sidelines of the Bangkok climate talks, it was learnt that the Asian Group met and finalised its 7 nominees to the Transitional Committee to design the Green Climate Fund that was established in Cancun. The nominees from Asia are from China, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and South Korea. However, it is learnt that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC) have yet to finalise their representatives to the Committee. The Transitional Committee is supposed to meet on 28-29 April in Mexico City.

At the closing plenary of the AWG-LCA presided over by its Chair Mr. Daniel Reifsnyder of the United States, Ambassador Arguello, speaking for the **G77 and China** stressed that Cancun marked a milestone

towards the fulfillment of the mandate of the Bali Action Plan “to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action now, up to and beyond 2012. On this basis, the AWG-LCA must continue its work with a view to presenting its results to the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in a way that contributes positively towards reaching an agreed outcome.”

Arguello said that there was a need to ensure a balanced result in both negotiating tracks (of the AWG-LCA and the Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol) and, in particular, to keep an internal balance within the AWG-LCA work in order to advance on all the issues under consideration in this Working Group in an equitable and integrated manner.

The negotiations should further contribute to implementing the tasks included in Cancun, while at the same time provide a framework for Parties to effectively address issues that were not concluded or that required further elaboration, he added.

On the road to Durban, Arguello stressed the need to ensure an open, Party-driven, transparent and inclusive multilateral process that would lead Parties to a consensus. In this regard, the Group reaffirmed that negotiations are to be led in an equal and fair manner.

He said that any outcome under the AWG-LCA in Durban shall recognize the historical responsibilities of developed country Parties and be in accordance with the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, while at the same time, take fully into account the legitimate priority needs of developing countries for the achievement of sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

Arugello also reiterated the necessity for the active participation of Palestine in the UNFCCC process.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo**, for the **African Group**, said that its understanding was that the first meeting of the year (in Bangkok) would provide Parties with the opportunity to develop a comprehensive work programme to fulfill the mandate established in the Bali Action Plan, detailing (i) the outstanding elements of work as contained in

the decision; and (ii) the completion of undertakings outlined in the Cancun decision.

The African Group expressed its extreme disappointment for not being able to engage in substantive discussions in Bangkok. It also expressed concern over the level of ambition of the Annex I Parties (developed countries) emission reductions reflected in the pre-session workshop (see TWN Bangkok Update #3), including the assumptions relating to the use of markets, land-use and other loopholes.

It stressed the importance of work towards clear metrics for comparability of efforts (as regards mitigation) from all Annex I Parties (referring to the US doing its share comparable to Kyoto Protocol developed country Parties), in accordance with the Bali Action Plan. It also believed that an important part of the AWG-LCA’s work is on the required sources and scale of financing to address the scale of climate challenge. The African Group also stressed the need to lay down the foundations for a comprehensive legally binding outcome in Durban.

**Grenada** speaking for the **Alliance of Small Island States** said that the Cancun Agreement was a step forward but not in terms of the scope, substance and ambition of the response that was demanded by Bali and the science of climate change. The Cancun decision was a foundation rather than the ceiling for future actions. Focus was needed on finalizing the operational elements as well as on the unresolved issues. Parties cannot avoid decisions on the legal architecture as well as the need for ensuring environmental integrity of the climate regime. There was need to address the mitigation ambition on the part of developed countries which must be ratcheted up. It said that Parties must not reinterpret the Cancun decision, and avoid procedural wrangling. It was satisfied that an agenda has been arrived at.

**Egypt** speaking for 22 countries in the **Arab Group** stressed the need to work in order to explore options and ways to increase the level of ambition of the economy-wide emission reduction targets of Annex 1 Parties. Welcoming the adoption of the agenda, Egypt said that this discussion was another reminder of how delicate a balance Parties achieved in Bali. It reflects as well on how determined all Parties are to

implement the Bali Action Plan and the results of the subsequent decisions of the COP (Conference of Parties) that reflect important milestones along the road, including Cancun.

It stressed the need to achieve the common goal in Durban to address the many challenges of climate change globally through the full and effective implementation of the Convention, its provisions, its principles and its Kyoto Protocol. It called for an outcome that fulfils the comprehensive mandate of the AWG-LCA in accordance with the Bali Action Plan and the institutional and practical arrangements that have been agreed in Cancun, especially with regard to the (Green Climate) Fund, the Adaptation Framework, the technology mechanism, the fulfillment of the financial pledges of developed countries, as well as their economy-wide emission reduction targets and the provision of new and additional resources and technology and capacity building for developing countries to support their adaptation efforts and their nationally appropriate voluntary mitigation actions.

It said that Parties in Bangkok succeeded to adopt a balanced and comprehensive agenda that will guide the work to Durban.

**Gambia** for the **Least Developing Countries** said that it was disappointed with the meeting in Bangkok in not consolidating work on key issues. It said finance was key for effective implementation and adaptation was a priority. It was also disappointed over the discussions on the level of ambition of developed country mitigation pledges.

**Bolivia** said that the fact that the adoption of the agenda took so long showed the insufficiencies and ambiguities in the Cancun decision and did not want the South African COP to be another Cancun. It said that Parties must reach emission reduction targets that limit temperature rise to well below 1.5 degree Celsius. Even the recognition of the 2 degree Celsius limit leaves far short on what is needed to be done. It said that there had been no expression of political will for greater commitments by developed countries in time for South Africa. In the next 10 years, developed countries must reduce their emissions by 40-50% if we are to approach a 1.5 degree Celsius target.

On the rules for decision-making at the COP, Bolivia said that 276 decisions have been adopted over the last 16 years and not one was adopted without an objection except in Cancun. Referring to the gaveling of the Cancun decision despite its explicit objection, Bolivia said that the “tragic incident cannot be repeated in South Africa.”

**Philippines** said that Cancun served as a milestone for the fulfillment of the Bali Action Plan and there was need in the work ahead to also address all the pending issues that needed resolution.

**Thailand** said that Bangkok saw a successful outcome and expressed delight that the agenda was adopted.

**Australia** said that the Cancun decision built on the Bali outcomes. It said that it came to Bangkok to implement the Cancun Agreement and was disappointed that some Parties were moving away from the important balance struck in Cancun. It said that it could not wait for procedural machinations and stressed the need for constructive work.

The **European Union** saw Cancun as a milestone in the negotiations but that it was not the end of road. It called for implementing the Cancun Agreement and in addressing the remaining central issues. It said a right balance was struck in the agenda but was disappointed that too much time was spent on this and that the substance of work could not start. It said that key issues remain to be resolved such as that of bunker fuels, agriculture, HCFC gases and the legal options.

The AWG-LCA will resume work on 7 June in Bonn, Germany.

### ***Kyoto Protocol stocktaking***

Meanwhile the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Future Commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) in Bangkok has been in the nature of a stock take with two plenary meetings and discussions held in one open-ended contact group as well as some informal consultations closed to observers.

In the second meeting of the stock taking plenary session of the Kyoto Protocol (also on Friday, 8 April, at 3.50 pm) the chair of the AWG-KP, Adrian

Macey of New Zealand said there were two purposes for the stocktaking: (i) a reflection on the work of the week, though a different method of work was used in Bangkok covering many political issues (discussions were held in one contact group and not in several “spin off” groups as in the previous few sessions); and (2) looking ahead to the work in Bonn in June.

Macey made 4 points on the week’s discussions. First the discussions did break some new ground and there was more openness on some of the more sensitive political issues. There was recognition of the need for more political clarity on the future of the Kyoto Protocol and especially the second commitment period for emissions reduction under the Kyoto Protocol.

Secondly there was a clearer understanding of the relationship between rules (including on land use, land use change and forestry) and targets (for emissions reduction targets), and the implications of rules on the level of ambition. There was broad agreement on the environmental integrity of those rules, better recognition of the role of rules in the level of

ambition of pledges, and how changes of rules will affect the level of ambition of pledges.

Thirdly, he said there were no common views on the way forward for the Bonn meeting (in June) even though a few suggestions and ideas have come from some Parties. These can be fleshed out by Parties, given to Secretariat and put on the (UNFCCC) website.

Lastly, he said that a large number of Parties believe that greater political attention is warranted if there is to be success for Durban. Macey further said that last year there was a ministerial meeting in Mexico, and perhaps Mexico and South Africa (as the next Presidency/host) can consider this for 2011.

(A more detailed Update on the AWG-KP plenary will follow.)

The AWG-KP will resume work on 7 June in Bonn.

*(\*With contributions from Chee Yoke Ling.)*