

Bonn climate talks foreshadow difficult negotiations in Dubai later this year

Kathmandu, 20 June (Prerna Bomzan): The tough climate talks in Bonn, Germany, dominated by political fights along North-South lines, clearly foreshadow what is to be expected at the annual climate talks later this year in Dubai, UAE.

The 58th intersessional climate talks of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Bodies (SB 58) closed on 15 June, in Bonn, Germany, with mixed and slow progress on the technical work under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).

The technical negotiations on many issues evidently exposed "political" flashpoints between developing and developed countries, especially, in relation to the underlying principles of "equity" and "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC)" of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement (PA), which anchors respective "differentiation" in climate action. These principles were unabashedly rejected by the developed countries across the board during the Bonn talks. (See [Update 10](#)) The other stance of developed countries was in attempts to delink the Convention and the PA, when such efforts were viewed by developing countries as being contrary to Articles 2.1 and 2.2 of the PA.

According to experienced developing country negotiators, by attempting to remove references to the Convention and the fundamental principles of equity and CBDR-RC in the various negotiating texts, developed countries clearly demonstrated the intention of not acknowledging their historical emissions and responsibility under the Convention, and thus, their legal obligations to take the lead on both, the implementation of climate action as well as in the delivery of the means of implementation (finance, technology transfer, capacity building) to developing countries for their actions.

Developing countries during the closing plenary clearly expressed that they are already implementing climate action with their own limited means, coupled with unsustainable debt burden, often hampering pressing developmental needs. Hence, in many negotiating rooms, they clearly articulated that any ambitious climate action being called for at the global level can only be feasible with new, additional, adequate and predictable climate finance, along with technology transfer and capacity building to be provided by developed countries, to achieve just transitions and address the disproportionate effects of climate change. There were clarion calls to developed countries to achieve just transitions and

address the disproportionate effects of climate change. There were clarion calls to developed countries to achieve their own fair share of efforts and not shift the burden to developing countries, in line with the mandates of the Convention and its PA.

The latest buzzword of developed countries which hogged the limelight of the talks was 'Article 2.1(c) of the PA', which resonated across all the substantive issues relating to mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, the means of implementation and particularly at the global stocktake (GST) negotiations.

(Article 2.1(c) of the PA relates to the making of finance flows consistent with a pathway to low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development. It is the most controversial issue in the climate negotiations between developed and developing countries, with differing interpretations about its meaning and scope. While developed countries view this Article as a stand-alone goal with attempts to shift their financial obligations to the private sector, the multilateral development banks (MDBs) and even some emerging developing countries, developing countries are pushing for its consideration in the entirety of Article 2 encompassing all long-term goals including Article 2.2 which anchors equity and CBDR-RC and on the understanding that it should be operationalised by Articles 9, 10, 11 which obligates developed countries for delivering on the means of implementation.)

Below are highlights of the negotiations in Bonn on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION (GGA)

Negotiations on the GGA framework was fraught with contention with developing countries aiming for draft conclusions with a comprehensive structure of the framework as well as inclusion of targets and/or indicators while the developed countries wanting to keep the structure very "high-level" without any targets and indicators. (See [Update 7](#))

Amid protracted deadlock until final hours of the closing day on 15 June, developing countries

eventually managed to capture and salvage the progress of work achieved in the development of a more comprehensive GGA framework, in Bonn, in the form of an [informal note](#) prepared by Co-facilitators **Mattias Frumerie (Sweden)** and **Janine Felson (Belize)**.

The informal note which attempts to capture the views expressed by Parties to date, states that "the content of the note is not intended to prejudge further work that Parties may want to undertake nor does it in any way prevent Parties from expressing other views that they may have in future".

This informal note was originally tabled by the Co-facilitators on 13 June with an accompanying [draft text](#) containing "3 options" on the way forward based on the divergent views of Parties on the issue. Developing countries led by **Suriname** for the **G77 and China** had resisted the informal note, given that it had no "formal status" and had preferred instead option 1 with the comprehensive annex (mirrored in the informal note), calling for the annex to be integrated in the draft text since they envisioned it as the draft decision text on the GGA framework.

On the other hand, developed countries led by the **United States (US)**, **Norway**, **Australia**, **Japan**, **Canada**, the **United Kingdom (UK)**, and the **European Union (EU)** strongly objected to both option 1 with the annex as well as the mirroring informal note and preferred only a "high-level" structure of the framework and/or a procedural decision to come out of the Bonn negotiations, best reflected by option 2 and option 3 of the draft text. They lamented that option 1 with the annex pushed by developing countries did not represent a "balance" of views of Parties.

It is to be noted that the annex (as well as the mirrored informal note) also contain language on the CBDR&RC principle, historical responsibility and means of implementation, a strong underpinning of the GGA framework called by developing countries. On the other hand, contentious issues such as "enabling conditions" and adaptation "policy" cycle pushed by developed countries are also captured in it.

Following lengthy deadlock on the "3 options", as a

last ditch attempt towards showing “utmost flexibility” to capture the progress of work and to move forward on a substantive draft conclusions, the **G77 and China** had offered a “bridging proposal” on the night of 14 June, by showing willingness to “engage” on option 3 but with additional elements and amendments as a “package”, specifically, that the informal note is considered “as a basis for further negotiations” in the development of the framework; adding an option for “possible targets” as an element of the framework as well as the option of no section on possible targets to reflect balance; and inviting submissions on the content of the possible elements of the framework.

However, despite the “compromise” offered to work on option 3 and with no reciprocity of flexibility by developed countries, the deadlock spilled over to the closing day of 15 June which saw the SBI Chair **Nabeel Munir (Pakistan)** urging Parties to move forward on such an important agenda item underlining further that either a “Rule 16’ of the Rules of Procedure (which meant a non-reflection of the discussions in any note in the absence of consensus) or “procedural conclusions” is “not an option”. **Cuba** speaking as the **G77/China** Chair also expressed similar sentiments pointing out that the Group has “lowered our expectations to the minimum possible” and that whatever option, be it as an informal note, is to “capture the work done here in whatever shape” in order to constructively work together to reach the mandate of adopting the framework at COP 28.

Co-facilitator **Frumerie (Sweden)** then proposed to put forward their draft text based on in-session views as well as during bilateral consultations with all negotiating groups on the way forward. The [draft conclusions](#) tabled as Co-facilitators proposal came as more of a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ text triggering last minute coordination of both developing and developed countries to arrive at a consensus. **Suriname** for the **G77/China** “in the spirit of compromise” pointed out the Group would like to ensure a “direct link” to the informal note which was supported by all the sub-groups. Following assurances of direct weblinks to both the in-session submissions and the informal note, the draft conclusions was finally agreed to by Parties.

Paragraph 6 of the adopted conclusion reads, “*The SBSTA and the SBI took note of the views presented by Parties during the 58th sessions of the subsidiary bodies, [footnote 3] which can be considered during the remainder of the work programme and in the development of the framework....., including to serve as input to discussions during the seventh and eighth workshops, recognizing that these views do not capture all those of Parties and do not represent consensus*”.

(Footnote 3 reads, “*The in-session submissions are available at <https://unfccc.int/event/sbsta-58?item=5> alongside the informal note prepared by the co-facilitators for this agenda item, available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/629890>, the content of which is not intended to prejudge further work that Parties may wish to undertake, nor does it in any way prevent Parties from expressing other views that they may have in the future*”.)

The translation of the informal note into a possible structure of the GGA framework with its substantive elements including targets as a possible draft decision text will be the litmus test for a successful adoption of a comprehensive GGA framework at COP 28.

NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS (NAPS)

The inclusion of the NAPs in the SBI provisional agenda transpired with the [proposal](#) submitted by **Cuba** on behalf of the **G77 and China** requesting that the “NAPs agenda item under the SBI can consider information on the progress of the implementation of national adaptation plans and discuss information from the AC (Adaptation Committee) and LEG (Least Developed Countries Expert Group), including on gaps and needs, and to take further action, as appropriate”.

(The NAP process, established in 2010, enables countries to identify medium and long-term adaptation needs and in developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those needs. for developing countries, a key challenge has been the issue of finance for the implementation of those plans.)

While developed countries wanted more clarity on what the G77/China wanted to discuss prior to its inclusion on the agenda, eventually consensus was

reached for its inclusion, and during the informal consultations, the mandate was expanded to also include discussions on the “formulation” of the NAPs besides its implementation, at the behest of **Switzerland** for the **Environmental and Integrity Group (EIG)** and supported by other developed countries.

A day before the scheduled closing of the SBs, on the evening of 14 June, procedural [draft conclusions](#) proposed by the Co-facilitators **Antwi Boasiko (Ghana)** and **Jens Fugl (Denmark)** was agreed to after drawn-out deliberations on whether consideration of further work should be “informed by” or “on the basis of” of the “[draft text elements](#)” referenced in the adopted draft conclusions. **Norway** supported by the **EU**, **Australia**, the **US**, and the **UK** supported the former which was seen to dilute the consideration the draft text elements while developing countries led by **Ghana** for the **G77/China** and all its sub-groups pushed for the latter arguing that “on the basis of” is a “standard agreed language” in such situations. Following heavily disputed negotiations, the language “including on the basis of” proposed by the Co-facilitators was agreed to.

The [draft text elements](#) are entirely in ‘brackets’ (denoting absence of consensus), given its content which includes some key sticky issues including whether the NAPs agenda item should be continued or be closed. The **EU** explicitly expressed its interest in closing the NAP agenda item and requested to bracket “paragraph 11” which speaks of the “iterative and continuous nature” of the NAP process as well as “paragraph 13 bis” proposed by **Ghana** on behalf of the **G77/China** which points to the continuation of consideration on the NAP process for the next five years.

The other sticky issue is in relation to the scaling up of support on “finance, technology and capacity building” contained in “paragraph 2bis” which was proposed by **G77/China**, but heavily opposed

especially by the **US**, who further introduced an alternative “paragraph 2bis alt” as a bridging proposal removing the references to the means of implementation. Likewise, the **US** strongly rejected references to predictable, adequate and scaled-up support to developing countries in “paragraph 9”, as well as references to “from developed country Parties according to their commitments and previous decisions, including doubling adaptation finance” in the same paragraph, which are now in brackets.

The other issue vehemently opposed by the **US** is the insertion of “paragraph 9bis” by **Argentina**, speaking for itself **Brazil, Uruguay (ABU)** that reads, “(The SBI requested the GCF [Green Climate Fund] to support the update and implementation of the NAPs.)” which is a long-standing issue of developing countries. The US however countered that the GCF is already updating and implementing NAPs and such guidance to the GCF is not appropriate in “this room”.

“Paragraph 3 alt” proposed by the **EU** is another potential issue of contention which reads, “(The SBI noted the important role of NAPs as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies to address those needs.)” which was opposed by **China** for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** as being “ambiguous” given the timeline and different national circumstances and priorities of developing countries, and also drew attention to “immediate” adaptation needs. **Panama** for the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and Caribbean (AILAC)** echoed China which was further supported by **Kuwait** for the **Arab Group**.

At COP 28, negotiations on the bracketed draft elements text will prove a daunting challenge.

(Further updates on other agenda items will follow).