

## Developed countries need to be at 'real zero' now – say developing countries

Penang, 9 June (Meena Raman) – A group of developing countries at the on-going climate talks being held virtually under the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC, said that net zero targets by developed countries several decades into the future, shifts away the focus from unprecedented emissions reductions needed at present and called for real zero emissions now.

**India** speaking for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** said that the large volume of historical emissions in the decades of unrestricted high carbon development cannot be ignored from any standpoint, and that assumptions of future targets, decades ahead, delay immediate action. Developed countries must shift focus from distant net zero targets to real emissions reductions now, it said adding that they need to lead and attain 'Real Zero to 2020' first, and then we follow by example and make declarations of future neutrality.

These remarks were made at informal consultations on the agenda item of the 'Second periodic review of the long-term global goal under the Convention and of overall progress towards achieving it', that was held on 8 June. The consultations were conducted by co-facilitators **Una May Gordon (Jamaica)** and **Frank McGovern (Ireland)**.

(Parties had agreed in Madrid in 2019 that the review start in the second half of 2020 and conclude in 2022, with the structured expert dialogue (SED) under the review to be held in conjunction with the SB sessions. The first session of the SED took place last year and the following session of the SED took place last week).

During the informal consultations, **India** recollected what Switzerland said last Nov at a pre-2020 roundtable, that there was need to avoid

"lenses of bifurcation and polarization", rather than foster an atmosphere of common understanding, where "we see each other as partners," noting that "all have to commit based on their capacity and responsibility."

India said that however admirable the notion of equality and partnership may be, it equivocates from the real issues, and added that equity is not prevalent in these discussions and that net zero targets several decades into the future shift our focus away from the immediate and unprecedented emissions reductions needed.

It said further that developed countries talk of bifurcation as if the Convention and the Paris Agreement (PA) did not provide for "developed countries taking the lead" in emission reductions.

Suggesting that their leadership was not borne out by the data, India referred to the Summary Report (by the UNFCCC secretariat presented at the pre-2020 roundtable Nov last year) to show that the non-EIT (economies in transition) Annex I Parties have not managed to reduce their aggregate emissions between 1990 and 2020. Instead, these non-EIT Parties' aggregate emissions increased from 13,227.97 MTCO<sub>2</sub>eq (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 1990 to 13,331.23 MTCO<sub>2</sub>eq in 2020. Although based on current trends, their emissions are predicted to decrease by a meagre reduction of 2.2 to 5.8%, elaborated India further.

India highlighted that the literature being considered is also not based on equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, adding that the 1.5-degree C Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) does not focus on pre-2020 emissions but

restricts itself to future mitigation, thereby completely overlooking historical emissions.

It asked developed countries if the world started from 2015 with the signing of the PA or from 2020 with the kick-start of the Paris-era, and whether this era negates the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol.

Referring to the 1.5-degree Special Report, India said that it indicates “significant gaps in pre-2020 action even amounting up to 40-50% and called for emissions reductions by about 25-40% by developed countries in this period.” Said India further that it was the IPCC that had indicated that developed countries were required to cut their greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions by at least 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020; and to revisit their 2020 targets no later than 2014. Between 2008-2012, Annex I countries reduced emissions by only 5%, it said and that thereafter, even after taking on the commitment to cut their GHGs emissions at least by 18% relative to 1990 levels between 2013 and 2020, the actual achievement is only 13% as per assessment reported by the Secretariat.

This, India said points towards the widening gap between mitigation ambition and actual emissions reduction by developed countries, who are boasting of over-achievement of their commitments, even though the ambition was not high enough to begin with.

It said further that developed countries must revisit their pre 2020 emission reduction targets and evaluate the implementation of the roadmap for achieving emission reductions at least 40% below 1990 levels. India said that there is no carbon budget remaining for wealthy high-emitting Annex-I nations to pass the burden for cutting their emissions on to developing countries. Any emissions gap, which was part of the pre-2020 period, must be carried over and fulfilled in the post 2020 period and developed countries which were responsible for them, must take that responsibility, it stressed further.

India re-emphasised with serious concern, the urgent need to address the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Annex – I Parties’ mitigation efforts in terms of global annual GHGs emissions by 2020 and the aggregate emission pathways consistent with holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-

industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

**China** said that that Parties must understand what ‘ambition’ means and its implication on the long-term global goal, elaborating that there needs to be a comprehensive understanding of the word which needs to include three aspects: (1) ambition in climate action targets/pledges; (2) ambition in implementation and progress made; and (3) ambition on the means of implementation, especially the finance and technology transfer support provided to developing countries. If any one of the three is missing, the result will be in the failure to achieve the long-term global goal. It added that focusing only on future targets is ‘fake ambition’, as this is without understanding the history of implementation and progress made towards previous pledges, and without understanding the support that developing countries received. China requested the SED and the periodic review to balance the three ‘ambitions’ in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

**Saudi Arabia** recalled the decision adopted in Madrid in 2019 (decision5/CP.25) and said that questions should be asked if have understanding has been enhanced on the long-term global goal and scenarios towards achieving; if progress has been made in relation to addressing information and knowledge gaps, including with regard to scenarios to achieve the long-term global goal and the range of associated impacts, since the completion of the 2013–2015 review; and the challenges and opportunities for achieving the long-term global goal with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention. It asked if the process has assessed the overall aggregated effect of the steps taken by Parties in order to achieve the long-term global goal in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention.

It noted that evaluations of how the mandate of the periodic review has been met is essential before planning consecutive meetings prior to realizing the real objective behind the SED in the first place. It said that the theme of assessing the overall aggregated effect of the steps taken by Parties in order to achieve the long-term global goal in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention has not been addressed.

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