

Developing countries concerned text-based negotiations yet to take off

Bonn, 3 September (Indrajit Bose) — Developing countries at the ongoing climate talks expressed concern over the mode of work including the proliferation of spin-off groups during a stocktake on 2 September.

Many developing countries said they had come prepared for text-based negotiations at the 31 August to 4 September session in Bonn but this has not happened yet.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) convened the stocktaking plenary at the request of developing countries. They had met with the ADP Co-Chairs **Daniel Reifsnyder (USA)** and **Ahmed Djoghlaif (Algeria)** earlier in the day and registered their concern about the mode of work being followed.

Opening the meeting, Djoghlaif said, “We received this request by a group to have stocktaking. Those who requested this meeting, can we hear from you what is your concern because concern has been raised on the mode of work and other issues.”

Taking the floor on behalf of the **Group of 77 and China (G77 and China)**, **South Africa** thanked the Co-Chairs for responding to their call for a stocktake. “Given the urgent need to accelerate the pace of our work, it would be good to assess our work and the little time left in the session and to have a solid basis for October session,” said South Africa. (The next ADP meet is scheduled for 19-23 October in Bonn.)

South Africa further said that to achieve this, it is important to adopt work methods that are clear, consistent and effective, and that will ensure party ownership in the outcome here in Bonn. (On 1 September, developing country Parties had called for conceptual discussions to

stop and for text-based negotiations to begin. See TWN Bonn News Update 3: [Developing countries make strong call for text-based negotiations](#)).

The G77 and China spokesperson said that some progress had been made in some of the facilitated and spin-off groups, but the progress had been uneven and in some groups, work had not progressed and discussions continued to be in the conceptual level. “There is a step change in process needed. It can be made if the Co-Chairs give clear instruction and give the mandate to the co-facilitators to capture progress so far. Of course, a certain degree of flexibility is required given the different nature of issues in the spin off groups but confidence in methodology is essential,” she said.

(The facilitated sessions started at the June session in Bonn earlier this year and facilitators were appointed to help drive the process. At the ongoing session, the facilitated groups created further spin-off groups to tackle specific issues among Parties: see TWN Bonn News Update 2: [ADP discussions move into eight facilitated groups with deep differences remaining](#).)

“The mandate we propose is co-facilitators should further work on the elements and get to bridging proposals as the outcome. Spin-off groups can be useful, but many Parties have small delegations and in the light of the budget crisis that has deprived many developing countries of their participation, we request you to keep spin-off groups to reasonable numbers,” said South Africa and added that the facilitated groups should address the imbalances in the Co-Chairs’ tool by including elements from Part 3 of the tool to the core agreement.

(The Co-Chairs had issued a tool to Parties on 24 July, which contains three parts. Part 1 has

provisions that are by nature appropriate for inclusion in an agreement; Part 2 has provisions appropriate for inclusion in a decision; and Part 3 contains provisions whose placement require further clarity among Parties in relation to the draft agreement or draft decision. See 'TWN Bonn News Update 1: [Parties reflect on Co-chairs' tool as ADP resumes work.](#))

Calling for clarity on the intended outcome of this session, South Africa said, "We need you to say what your plans are and how you will capture progress to be able to have a solid basis for negotiations in October".

G77 and China was supported by the **Least Developed Countries (LDC)**, the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**, the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)**, the **African Group**, the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)**, the **Arab Group** and the **Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)**.

Developed country groupings such as the **Umbrella Group** and the **European Union** also expressed concern over the slow pace of work (see highlights of interventions below).

Following the interventions, Co-Chair Djoghlaif said Parties had started negotiating and agreed to achieve what they wanted to achieve. He read out paragraph 15 of the Co-Chairs' scenario note, which they had issued on 24 July 2015. The paragraph reads: *The forthcoming ADP session affords Parties the opportunity to accelerate their negotiations. Parties' efforts during the session are expected to produce a clearer understanding and articulation of the elements of the Paris package with regard to both workstream 1 and workstream 2. In this regard, it will be important for Parties to develop bridging proposals and, where required, narrow and crystallize options for further negotiation.*

(Workstream 1 is tasked to negotiate the Paris agreement that is expected to enter into force in 2020 while Workstream 2 deals with pre-2020 ambition.)

He also referred to the 19 bilateral meetings the Co-Chairs had on the mode of work and expected outcome of the session and said that the Co-Chairs had issued a clarification note 15 minutes after their last bilateral on 30 August 2015. He read out paragraph 4 of the note,

titled 'Further clarifications by the ADP Co-Chairs on the mode of work at ADP2.10'. The paragraph reads: *The additional tool of 24 July has been conceived and proposed as an attempt to help Parties to accelerate the pace of their negotiations and to assist them in moving from a text containing a compilation of positions to one that can serve as a basis for negotiation.*

"This was what we all agreed," said Djoghlaif. "Those asking questions about better clarity (should) refer to this. The Geneva Negotiating Text is a compilation of positions. The tool you have received is a better compilation of positions," he said. (The Geneva text was the outcome of the February meeting of the ADP.)

He thanked the small delegations for the "amazing degree of flexibility shown" to allow Parties to collectively achieve what they had achieved.

On the spin-off groups, he said that where the co-facilitators asked Parties to get together, they were meetings of interested Parties. Then there were spin-off groups to discuss text. "We have daily meetings in the morning and afternoon with the co-facilitators to coordinate so that all the co-facilitators have the same information. We are pleased to inform you that you will move to text-based negotiations. All of the co-facilitators are at your service and all of them are willing to submit to you," he said.

On the crosscutting issues he said there had been movement and joint spin-off groups had been agreed upon. "For the next phase, we intend to start bilaterals to seek your views. When we leave on September 4, it is important to have a roadmap. Soon you will have text-based negotiations with your co-facilitators," said Djoghlaif, concluding his intervention.

Highlights of Interventions

Speaking for the **LDCs, Angola** sought further clarity on where Parties were headed. "We should accelerate the work to fulfill the ADP mandate without any delay. We should focus on migration of elements from Part 3 to Part 1 of the tool for a draft agreement, so that it will form a basis for the October session. We have seven days. We should be mindful that any outcome should be balanced and give explicit recognition to the LDCs in the agreement. Many of our members have small delegations so we request you to consider this

while scheduling further spin-offs.”

Speaking for the **AOSIS, Maldives** said there had been uneven progress and some groups were moving much too slowly. “The pace of discussions is of critical importance and topics such as financing for loss and damage and adaptation have not been adequately scheduled. We must clarify options and move elements from part 3 to Parts 1 and 2 of the tool. We are ready to explore options on what the outcomes will be and the terms under which it should be developed. We must have clarity on the way forward before we leave Bonn. Everyone must be on the same page when they arrive in Bonn in October.”

Malaysia spoke for the **LMDC** and said Parties came to Bonn on the basis of Co-Chairs’ tool to conduct effective, well paced and targeted negotiations. “We came here well prepared. We had preparatory meetings and we were prepared to engage in text-based negotiations because we thought this is the best way to proceed. But problems emerged. The focus was to have targeted text, using your tool because it encompasses all that is there in the Geneva Negotiating Text. We have three parts, but there is nothing missing. Maybe we have to bridge proposals, but the objective was to have text-based negotiations,” it said.

Describing the reason for the Group’s concerns, Malaysia said, “On the first day, we were getting our act together and a lot of glitches happened. On the second day, we found ourselves back into conceptual discussions and sometimes on things that were not even related to the text. This is where we were concerned. We have five more days in the October session and then of course there is Paris.”

Malaysia also said that the journey of a hundred miles begins with the first step and that they were looking for the first step. “We have heard the voices of all the developing countries expressing this concern. We want text to capture everything when we get to October. Some movement has begun to take shape in the last hour. This little movement must begin. On Friday (4 September), we are looking at a cohesive text, drawn from your tool, which is tightly bound and then we can move forward together,” it said.

Speaking for the **African Group, Sudan**

stressed the importance of time. “We have gone through more than half of the time left. The African Group wants a text, which will serve as the basis for negotiations. It is important to strive for balance in the text and ensure Party ownership. We have concluded the first reading of your tool where Parties have outlined their vision to restore balance. It is important to accelerate work and engage in textual negotiations,” it said. There is need for clarity on the purpose of the work and on bridging text and a clear and consistent message must be sent to the co-facilitators that Parties own the text, it added, stressing on the need for bridging text proposals.

Speaking for the **Arab Group, Saudi Arabia** shared the group’s concern on the pace of negotiations. It reiterated the need for negotiations between Parties on the elements and whether the elements were captured in the agreement. It said it had heard the same positions being repeated and that by 4 September, the group hoped that Parties could come up with elements of an agreement that would provide the basis to build negotiations in October and December. “We wish to see all the elements—mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building and transparency of action and support—covered. Without these elements, we are not sure how to progress (in) negotiations. We should at least have a skeleton by the end of this week,” said Saudi Arabia.

Speaking for the **ALBA** group of countries, **Bolivia** stressed that Parties had not engaged in substantive negotiations thus far and were stuck in conceptual discussions. It added that there had been no text-based negotiations and there was no clarity among the co-facilitators. It sought the Co-Chairs’ guidance on moving forward.

Speaking for **AILAC, Guatemala** said there had been unbalanced progress in the facilitated groups. To secure a significant and balanced output, it encouraged co-facilitators to identify key elements missing from the agreement. Also, co-facilitators should help Parties identify the elements where bridging proposals could emerge. On the outcome of this session, a new iteration of the tool may not take us far enough. It said it recognizes the difficulty of creating too many spin offs and awaited clarity and guidance from the Co-Chairs.

India expressed concern that there was neither comfort among Parties with the Geneva Negotiating Text nor the Co-Chairs' tool. India said it was looking for text to be the basis of negotiations.

Nigeria said it came to the meeting in high spirit, knowing Parties would negotiate. "We did not want to waste time in the opening plenary, that was the high spirit with which we left the room but until now, we are discussing conceptual framework and discussing placement of issues. We are not making progress. If there were any concrete progress that we would want to report back home; it would be difficult to send delegates back in October, except for those that will be sponsored. Financing other delegates for the meeting would become a problem. When we demand text-based negotiations, most co-facilitators responded saying this is an informal setting and that text-based could not be done. Is this a new setting? We negotiate on text even in informal-informal setting. This means there is no clear signal from you to the co-facilitators. Perhaps, the co-facilitators were not given clear mandate. When we are saying what we are discussing cannot be undertaken as text-based negotiations, how would discussions in spin-off groups add value to our work? We have very few delegates and some countries have one-member delegations. It is difficult to cover the spin-off groups. We need from you clear signals and clear mandates to make good progress."

Tanzania wished the Co-Chairs had listened to it on ways of progressing. It said Parties were not progressing as was noted in paragraph 15 of the Co-Chairs' scenario note, which they had issued on 24 July. "The last sentence says it is important for Parties to develop bridging proposals and that was what they had come prepared to do in Bonn. But when we came here, we were surprised because we came back to storytelling, concepts and this has brought us where we are today. It is important to give

clear guidance to your co-facilitators and begin negotiations. There are only seven negotiating days to deliver what the world expects us to deliver," it said.

Speaking for its 28 member states, **the European Union** said it shared the view of the others on the pace of negotiations. "We were saying we need a short, concise text in February (in Geneva) but in February text more than doubled. We said the same thing in June. We were disappointed when we saw your tool because it was not in a shape to be negotiated. It did have some benefits in terms of structure and drew attention to the fact that the agreement would be short and concise. Parties have engaged with your tool and in many areas we are seeing major areas of convergence. In October, we need to negotiate on a concise draft agreement and associated draft decision."

Speaking for the **Environment Integrity Group (EIG), Switzerland** said it shared the frustration that others had expressed. It, however, said that Parties were to blame because they had asked for time to discuss process. "We don't need more time. We need more commitment to discuss substance," it said.

Speaking for the **Umbrella Group, Australia** said the group was concerned with the pace of progress and called for the October session to begin with a text that was not a compilation text, but one that was concise, targeted and reflected convergence. It called for the need to accelerate negotiations and said going line by line would not be helpful. It added that many sections did not focus on the Paris outcome and that there were gaps. It said that the work of the co-facilitators was starting to move ahead and some groups had started turning their understanding into text. It also said that the co-facilitators could help by distilling the storyline by what they heard and to help Parties with this.