

Contention continues over capacity building mechanism in Paris agreement

Bonn, 3 September (Hilary Chiew) – After two meetings of the facilitated group on capacity building, Parties could not agree on the proposal for the establishment of a capacity building mechanism to be included in the Paris agreement.

The meetings were convened under the 10th part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change that is taking place from 31 August to 4 September in Bonn.

Developing countries expressed deep dissatisfaction that this specific demand and their other concerns are not reflected in Part 1 of the ADP's Co-Chairs' tool that was described as a non-paper illustrating possible elements of a Paris package.

(The tool is divided into three parts. Part 1 comprises provisions that are by nature "appropriate for inclusion in an agreement"; Part 2 contains provisions that are 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", as per the Co-Chairs' scenario note issued on 24 July.)

At the first meeting of the capacity building facilitated group on 1 September, co-facilitator Artur Runge-Metzger (Germany) asked Parties to provide their views on the ADP Co-Chairs' tool, and assured Parties that there was no hierarchy of the three parts of the tool and urged Parties to engage with an open mind and be ready to explore ways forward to land capacity building safely in Paris. As co-facilitator, he hopes to create a positive atmosphere and for the group to act like a harmonious family in building bridges. He further said 'it was lucky' that only two paragraphs of the

negotiating text on capacity building were in Part 3.

China representing the Group of 77 and China (G77 and China) said although there were only two paragraphs of text in the capacity building section that were relegated to Part 3, it said a fair way of treating the call of this large grouping of countries for an international mechanism for capacity building would be to have the proposal placed either in Part 1 or Part 2 of the tool.

It is disappointed that despite the persistent elaboration and clarification of its proposal for a new institution to address the urgent issue of capacity building, the Group's voice was not heard.

Pointing to the fact that there is a mandate on capacity building in the Convention and in the Warsaw decision (meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2013), it said missing the opportunity to address the matter would not enable developing countries to deliver their efforts to fight climate change.

China stressed that capacity building is related to everything in coping with climate change and currently there is a lack of coordination for all these activities. It also said the Durban Forum on capacity building which is regarded as the institution cannot fulfil the functions and hence the Group has asked for a new mechanism. It reiterated that capacity building is a matter of emergency and without enhancing capability, developing countries cannot address the risks of climate change identified by the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Speaking for the African Group, Swaziland said it would like to see clear and specific activities on enhancing capacity building. It said there is disconnect between the framework and reality on

the ground and the review of the framework lacks provision for updating it.

It would like to see in the (Paris) agreement how current institutional arrangements under the Convention can be enhanced for better capacity building needs, noting that developing countries' reliance on external technical capacity would present problems of implementation. It stressed that the new agreement must provide a clear mandate to establish a home for capacity building that translates all the actions needed.

The African Group wondered how Parties could prioritise capacity building if it is not a core mandate (referring to the agreement) and is confused that Parties are moving in circles.

Jamaica representing the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said it is strongly of the view that we need a mechanism to centralise the issue of capacity building correctly for developing countries but this was not reflected in Part 1 of the Co-Chairs' tool. It said what has been provided so far is technical support needs like implementation of reporting requirements, national communication, biennial update report where the typical scenario is a three-day workshop but the actual implementation would require the expertise of consultants and a three-day workshop cannot build such expertise.

It is time, Jamaica said, to resolve the issue of capacity building needs and the Group is looking at having it anchored in the agreement part (of the Co-Chairs' tool) if we are serious. It said Parties can work on the modalities and procedure of the mechanism over the next few years.

Saudi Arabia representing the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) expressed support for a new institution and requested for paragraph 75 in Part 3 of the Co-Chairs' tool to be moved to Part 1 or 2.

Echoing the concerns of the other developing country groupings, **Iran** described capacity building as the turbo engine that could lift the plane of mitigation and adaptation actions that constitute the new agreement that is applicable to all. It said it is not a question that developing countries are hesitating to take actions but the capacity has to be there. Therefore, it has to be strongly highlighted in the agreement to enable developing countries to follow the right path to achieve the 1.5C or 2C temperature rise target before the end of the century. Iran said articles in

Part 1 currently do not address this significant need appropriately and it is inclined to support moving paragraph 75 in Part 3 to Part 1.

Senegal representing the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) reiterated that capacity building is a cross-cutting issue but it is time to treat it as a standalone issue. It noted that there is institutional arrangement for finance and technology which were also dealing with cross-cutting issues. It said Parties have been talking but not moving forward and it appeared that maybe some Parties do not want to move forward, stressing that we need to produce a negotiation text at the end of this session.

Senegal stressed that the LDCs do not have the capacity to adapt and mitigate and while Parties continue to negotiate, it is the people on the ground and rural areas in LDCs that are suffering the most. It said the Durban Forum is just a platform where all the United Nations agencies come and share their work in the developing countries. The LDC Group wants a new institution to be in the agreement.

This was supported by **Gambia** that wanted also measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) of support of capacity building in the agreement and suggested moving both paragraphs 74 (on objective and focus) and 75 that are currently in Part 3 into Part 1.

Acknowledging the divergence of views at this moment, **Japan** said the differences came from the lack of common understanding on how to build capacity in the pre- and post 2020 period. It said it is good to continue to exchange views and pointed to the capacity building workshop mandated by the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) at its 42nd session in June that is to be held back-to-back with the ADP October session.

Nevertheless, it said there is common understanding that all Parties have strong willingness to address capacity building as a matter of urgency.

The United States said although Part 1 is not ideal but 'it can be tweaked' and agreed that institutional arrangement is something that should be included in the agreement but believed that the Durban Forum for capacity building will serve the purpose. It struggled to understand what the new capacity building mechanism will do in terms of adding value.

The **European Union** said it is unfortunate that the request for a new institution has presented a binary situation and would risk not addressing the concerns of capacity building but see there could be convergence of ideas.

New Zealand said Parties are discussing capacity building in the abstract. **Australia** preferred having informal meetings to deepen understanding.

In response, **Swaziland** said it is unfair that developing countries have to justify why it wanted to move paragraph 75 to Part 1 while there are items in Part 1 that do not enjoy consensus. It also lamented that Parties are still trying to ask about the role of the mechanism where the proposal has clearly stated the components and functions which goes to show that perhaps they have not read the proposal.

China said we are here to seek support to build our capacity to cope with the general threat of climate change and not here to convince others what we need. It said developing countries' concern is not to have the door close on us which would be a failure but for us to move quickly with our position and discuss the matter as a capacity building family.

At the end of the meeting, co-facilitator Runge-Metzger proposed two informal meetings to discuss capacity building between 2016 and 2020 which were termed as 'milestones'. The first informal facilitated by Swaziland was held immediately after the 1 September meeting. The second informal meeting followed the second facilitated group meeting on 2 September. It was facilitated by Japan, and discussed enhancement of institutional arrangement. These spin-off groups will report back at the third and last facilitated group meeting scheduled for 3 September.

At the second facilitated group meeting on 2 September, China speaking for **G77 and China** raised concern about the limited time before the current session ends and reasserted the Group's demand for the new institutional arrangement calling for an international capacity building mechanism to be reflected in the agreement part of

the Paris package by the next ADP session in October.

Co-facilitating the meeting, **Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu (Democratic Republic of Congo)** said the G77 and China's concern has been captured clearly in the meeting minutes and the ADP Co-Chairs are aware of it and it would be addressed at the stocktake meeting later in the day.

Referring to the first informal meeting on 1 September, the **European Union** said the discussion was encouraging this time as Parties recognised that the Paris package needs to advance capacity building between Paris and the entering into force of the new agreement (by 2020). There was substantive discussion on the mechanism and the EU has suggested the issue of institutional arrangement as part of the interim package. It however pointed out that Parties need to be aware that some issues discussed under this section are also being discussed in other sections such as finance.

Swaziland speaking for the African Group supported China on the issue of process. It said Parties need clarity as we move forward but it is unclear on what we engaging with. It wanted to know if the Co-Chairs' tool could be modified as outlined by the G77 and China to improve on it.

To this, **Runge-Metzger** said the Co-Chairs are fearful of a second round of Geneva negotiations (that took place in February) where things are bracketed and they wanted concrete suggestion to avoid second guessing (what Parties want) as it would lead the process in the wrong direction.

Swaziland said it is not convinced that the review of the (existing) framework can solve the issue of capacity building. It said the process lacks trust, pointing out that some Parties that said strengthening of the Durban Forum cannot be done in the SBI at its 42nd meeting in June are now saying that it can be done here in the ADP. "Try to convince me what has changed now ... make me believe that you are negotiating in good faith," it said.