

Parties express concern on slow pace of negotiations

Bonn, 22 October (Indrajit Bose) — Negotiations continued in spin-off groups behind closed doors on day three of the ongoing climate talks in Bonn. The pace of negotiations was reported to be slow by all the co-facilitators in charge of the spin-off groups in their report back to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) under the Convention.

The 11th part of the second session of the ADP is meeting from 19 to 23 October in Bonn. The ADP is co-chaired by Ahmed Djoghlafl (Algeria) and Daniel Reifsnnyder (USA).

Laurence Tubiana, the Special Representative of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, spoke for the incoming COP Presidency (France) and expressed concern on the pace of negotiations and the mode of work followed in the spin-off groups. “I am concerned about the reports I hear from the spin-offs. I don’t think this way of working will lead us to success in Paris,” said Tubiana at the first spin-off stocktake session on 21 October. Getting to a good result in spin-offs with clear and consolidated text with only a few options open for ministers, that is the only way to get to success in Paris, she stressed.

To the Parties, she said, “There is no Plan B, only Plan A. You wanted ownership. You got the ownership. It is in your hands. Let’s get to business and find a solution that works. We can’t wait till Paris. We have to find a solution now,” said Tubiana.

The Group of 77 and China (G77 and China) proposed a clear mode of work for the spin-off groups, which was largely accepted by Parties, including the European Union and the United States. South Africa speaking for G77 and China noted the need for constraint by all not to produce new text and ideas at this stage.

“We need a text by the end of the week that we can take to Paris as a basis of negotiations in which many issues are agreed. This text must also reflect areas where we have not been able to reach consensus with clear options for our political principals. However, we cannot leave it up to ministers to do the work of negotiators. It is negotiators that need to reach consensus on most issues, leaving only the highly sensitive political issues for ministers to resolve,” said South Africa.

On the mode of work in spin-offs, South Africa said facilitators were approaching the text line by line, while in others space was being given to more conceptual discussion and the facilitators were assisting the Parties to organise the text. Outlining the Group’s proposal on the mode of work, South Africa said that the mandates should be given to co-facilitators to order and streamline the text. Parties should be given the opportunity to make their own streamlining proposals. Co-facilitators should also be allowed to identify options and reflect it in the text for Parties to consider, said South Africa. It stressed that it is “critically important” that the spin-off groups follow the same methodology, in order to avoid uncertainty and further delays. The need for a common understanding on the mode of work is essential. South Africa also said that the “constructive and restrained manner” in which the Group has engaged in the different spin-off groups have demonstrated their commitment to work in a disciplined and united manner to reach a balanced and fair agreement.

The EU supported G77 and China’s proposal on the mode of work and said that progress had been far too slow and would not get Parties to where they need to be by the end of the week. The US also supported G77 and

China's proposals on the mode of work.

Co-Chair Ahmed Djoghlaif also encouraged Parties to come up with bridging proposals and to reach out to each other in a spirit of compromise. He said that the facilitators were at the service of Parties and they would do whatever is mandated but that they would need some more time to come up with bridging proposals.

Tubiana took the floor again to say that South Africa had responded to her concerns. "There is no opposition from Parties. For the sake of time, if you could have a clear ruling, we could begin work now," said Tubiana to the Co-Chairs.

In response, Djoghlaif said to Tubiana that his was a "definitive response". "You cannot expect facilitators of spin-off groups on transparency and adaptation and loss and damage (which were scheduled right after the stocktake) to do this now. But we will do it. It's a demonstration to help us to do what we are supposed to by the end of this week," he said.

Following the stocktake in the morning of 21 October, an open-ended contact group on Article 1 of the draft agreement titled 'definitions' and spin-off groups on preamble, transparency (Article 9), adaptation and loss and damage (Articles 4 and 6), finance (Article 6) and workstream 2 convened working till late evening. (On 20 October, spin off groups on mitigation, finance, technology development

and transfer and capacity building, and pre-2020 climate action or Workstream 2, were held.) Some 'informal-informals' were also held among Parties to come up with bridging proposals and there was a stocktake session again in the evening at 6.15 pm where co-facilitators reported on the progress made in the spin-offs on 21 October (see separate Update on the spin-off groups).

(Observers were allowed at the stocktake and open-ended contact group discussions on Articles issues and elements not allocated to spin-off groups.)

During the second stocktake, South Africa spoke for G77 and China and said that while it was pleased that work had started in earnest, the guidance to the co-facilitators had not been implemented. It said that this should be done for the spin-offs scheduled for 22 October.

Russia said that the picture painted at the stocktake was too "rosy" and that progress in the spin-offs was "well below expectation". The spin-offs are nothing more than a compilation of text, added Russia, calling for text-based negotiations rather than having general discussions.

It was decided that there would be two further spin-offs (from 7 pm to 9 pm) on global stocktake (Article 10) and Articles 12-26 of the draft agreement. The next stocktake is scheduled at 6.15pm on 22 October.