

Disagreements over review of achievements under the UNFCCC

Bonn, 26 June (TWN) – Disagreements between developed and developing countries arose over the need to review the progress on achievements under the UNFCCC, at the Bonn climate talks. The talks which began on 17 June, are scheduled to end on 27 June.

Developing countries, led by the **G77 and China** wanted a review of the overall progress and implementation of actions of Parties in the pre-2020 period under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, covering mitigation and adaptation actions as well as the provision of support to developing countries and to address the implementation gaps.

Developed countries on the other hand opposed the need for a review, as they said that a mechanism was already in place under the global stocktake (GST) of the Paris Agreement (PA), which will take place in 2023. (The GST will focus on the collective progress of Parties in implementing the PA in the post-2020 timeframe).

These disagreements emerged at the informal consultations under the agenda item related to the ‘scope of the next periodic review of the long-term global goal under the Convention and of overall progress towards achieving it,’ which is handled jointly by the UNFCCC’s Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

With no agreement on the scope of the periodic review, Parties agreed to forward draft procedural conclusions to the Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies, to consider the issue further at its next session to be held in December this year in Chile.

(In 2010, Parties had agreed on a long-term global goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions so as to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. The UNFCCC’s Conference of Parties [COP] also decided to periodically review: (i) the adequacy of the long-term

global goal in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention, and (ii) the overall progress toward achieving the long-term global goal, including a consideration of the implementation of the commitments under the Convention”.

(The first periodic review was the **2013-2015 review**. It led to the decision in Paris in 2015 on the new long-term global goal “that the goal is to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change” [which was also reflected in the PA] and that “in the light of the overall progress made towards achieving the long-term global goal, including consideration of the implementation of the commitments under the Convention, Parties should act urgently and ambitiously under the Convention while recognizing the technological, economic and institutional challenges”).

(In 2017, at the 23rd meeting of the UNFCCC [COP 23], Parties requested the Subsidiary Bodies’ to resume their consideration of this matter at the current climate talks, with a view to forwarding a recommendation to COP 25, to be held later this year and that this will also take into account the relevant work on the GST).

A key divergence at the present Bonn talks was around whether the periodic review itself should continue. While several developed countries proposed that there was no need to continue with the periodic review, developing countries argued that the scope of the agenda item was not about negotiating the mandate of the long-term goal review, but it was about defining the scope of the second periodic review as mandated under the Convention.

Several divergences emerged during the course of the discussions in informal consultations on the issue,

which were captured in a document referenced as a footnote to the proposed draft conclusions.

The **G77 and China** were united in their demand to flesh out the scope of the periodic review and provided a proposal that stressed that the second periodic review should focus on the following matters:

- “Overall progress and implementation in the period up to 2020 in relation to the implementation of the mitigation pledges made by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, including the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol;
- The nationally appropriate mitigation actions communicated by Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention under decision 1/CP.16;
- The implementation of adaptation actions and the provision of support for adaptation in developing countries;
- The fulfillment of existing commitments under the Convention with respect to the provision of the means of implementation to developing countries, and addressing any implementation gaps in this regard”.

The proposal also said that the second periodic review shall not duplicate work with, nor prejudice the outcomes of, the GST and it should start in 2020 and conclude by 2022.

However, **United States, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the European Union (EU)** said that there was no need for the review given the GST mechanism in place under the PA.

This was reflected in the proposals by developed countries that the scope of the second periodic review was no longer relevant. They called for the SBSTA and SBI to recommend that the review be closed, “to avoid duplication of work and ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of relevant processes under the Convention and the PA, including the adoption of decision regarding the GST.”

Several developed countries were of the view that with existing processes such as the pre-2020 stock-take (stock-taking of the efforts in the pre-2020 timeframe under the Convention), the annual forum of the Standing Committee on Finance, the work on long-term climate finance and forthcoming processes such as the GST in place, there was no need for the periodic review and that if it took place, it should not duplicate existing processes.

Developing countries led by the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** responded that non-duplication of work should not result in the absence of a balanced review that treats only what is left over from other review processes already in place. “While separate, component processes under the Convention may contribute to the review, they cannot over-ride the need for all elements under the Convention to be integral aspects of the review,” said **India** for the **LMDC**.

The LMDC also said that the “retreat in global climate action signaled by the desire of individual Parties to exit from various agreements and commitments and its consequences in the lack of adequate mitigation efforts must find its due place in the review,” in an obvious reference to the US which has notified that it will exit the PA.

On the differences between the periodic review and the GST, developing countries said that while the GST process begins in 2023 and has a periodicity of five years, the review under the Convention takes place after every assessment of the IPCC or 7 years from the previous review.

They also said that the possibility of overshoot scenarios did not unambiguously lie within the scope of the PA, whereas it is readily accommodated under the Convention, and therefore the periodic review must continue.

However, no agreement could be reached, and Parties agreed to continue the consideration of this matter at the next session (in Chile later this year), with a view to forwarding a recommendation for consideration by COP 25. This was reflected in the draft procedural conclusions agreed to during informal consultations on 25 June.

In the draft conclusions agreed, Parties decided to recall relevant decisions on the scope of the next periodic review; noted that Parties exchanged their views on the matter at this session. The draft conclusions also take note of past decisions including on the GST.

With the Bonn climate talks scheduled to end on 27 June, negotiations on some issues such as common timeframes and technology related issues have concluded. However, several other issues such as Article 6, terms of reference for the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, IPCC 1.5°C Special Report, are ongoing.