

The road to Warsaw

The forthcoming Conference of Parties (COP) at Warsaw is considered more of a process COP rather than the one where major decisions will be taken. It is the first in a three-part series leading to the final pit-stop — the 21st COP at Paris which is the deadline set by parties for signing onto a post-2020 deal. A lot of ground, both technical and political, will need to be covered on various issues as the 2015 deadline approaches. At Doha, the Ad hoc Working Groups on Long Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP), initially set up to negotiate a post-2012 climate order, were officially closed. But several issues within the LCA have not reached closure and these have been carried over to the subsidiary bodies, Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). The following is the status of issues under various stages of discussion.

Mitigation

A lot of discussion has taken place under the ADP (Ad hoc working group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Action), the negotiating track vested with the responsibility to carve out a deal by 2015. Discussions under the ADP range from whether a future regime needs to follow a top-down approach wherein the targets are prescribed to parties which are binding upon them, like the Kyoto Protocol, or a bottom-up

approach similar to what emerged from the Cancun deal. Under the Cancun agreement, parties had turned in targets based on national circumstances and measured different aspects or sectors of the economy unlike the Kyoto Protocol where all parties were required to take on uniform economy-wide emission reduction targets adding up to an aggregate reduction from a base year decided upon by all parties.

Now, many developed country parties are supporting a hybrid approach wherein parties will pledge their targets first, to be evaluated against the 2-degree goal and then find ways to close a gap between the pledges and the agreed goal. Many parties, specifically the EU, have placed emphasis on a World Leaders Summit that UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon has called for on climate change in the second half of 2014. This has been marked as a venue for the first round of turning in pledges. The EU has called for a COP decision on this at the upcoming Warsaw COP.

Formal discussions sought

The ADP carries out discussions on both, post-2020 framework, under work stream 1, and on increasing ambition in the pre-2020 period to close the existing gap, under work stream 2. Discussions so far have been carried under roundtables and workshops to build trust between parties. Parties, however, have called for more focussed discussion under formal contact groups to begin in Warsaw.

What is up for discussion at Warsaw: A snapshot

ADP	
Work stream 1	Ex-ante clarity formulation of pledges for 2015 deal, MRV and transparency issues Application of principles of the Convention, Equity reference framework Means of implementation - Finance and technology transfer and MRV for finance
Work stream 2	Moving HFCs to Montreal Protocol AOSIS proposal on renewable energy and energy efficiency Increasing existing developed country commitments and increasing NAMA pledges from parties International complementary initiatives (Short-lived climate forcers, fossil fuel subsidies)
SBI	Loss and damage, 2013-15 review
SBSTA	REDD, New market mechanism

Equity

At Doha, the US threatened the continued existence of equity as the basis of a future deal. Arguments broke out between the South and the North. Eventually, the US was forced to come back to the table and it was agreed that under work stream 1, parties would discuss how the Principles of the Convention should apply in the future deal. Throughout the ADP sessions held in Bonn in May and June 2013, developing country parties reiterated that the principles of the Convention were sacrosanct and cannot be renegotiated under any circumstances. However, overtime, it has also become clear that equity cannot remain a philosophical/theoretical notion and needs to be operationalised in a meaningful manner. While the US still remains opposed to any formula-based approach that will calculate what countries should do based on their historical responsibilities and capabilities, many others, while not taking such a hardline, have refused to adopt a clear stance as yet.

Some parties and groups, such as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and South Africa have suggested looking at an equity reference framework. At the Bonn session, calling for the elaboration of an equity reference framework, the Gambia, on behalf of the LDCs, supported the use of metric and non-metric criteria, such as historical responsibility, future sustainable needs and vulnerabilities. Ethiopia proposed a hybrid approach based on, inter alia: historical and per capita emissions; the global temperature goal; quantified and apportioned atmospheric space; and quantified emission rights. Such an approach where data or indicators will be used to capture principles such as responsibility and capability is receiving wide support among several civil society actors as well.

Some civil society actors demand an equity review of the pledges similar to a science review. So, not only would the pledges be reviewed against the 2-degree goal, but they also would be evaluated against equity criteria. These criteria are expected to capture the principles of the Convention in a quantitative manner. The key principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR/RC)

can for example be captured through data that accounts for historical emissions and would measure capability via per capita GDP or income. Several formulations exist on how such data can be used to determine “fair shares” for each country. Such a “fair share” would determine if a party’s contribution to addressing climate change is based on equity i.e if it is in accordance with a party’s responsibility for the problem and its capacity to tackle it. Such a formulation also usually shows how developed countries have both contributed to more emissions historically and are economically better placed to address the problem. However, the existing differentiation between parties — developed and developing — is seen to be rather strict and does not capture the entire spectrum of varying responsibilities and capabilities. Singapore, in its most recent submission, stated that such an indicator-based approach can be equivalent to renegotiating the Convention. They say that the Annexes that differentiate between the developed and developing countries cannot be renegotiated.

Fears reign high on both sides on the outcome of such an approach and the Warsaw COP will serve as a litmus test to determine whether such an approach will gather more political momentum or not.

Finance

There have been suggestions of the Warsaw COP being a finance COP which would gather a meeting of finance ministers from countries. This will be the first time that finance ministers are invited to discuss under the settings of the COP.

There still remains a yawning gap between funds turned in for the fast start finance commitment which ended in the year 2012 and what needs to start coming in towards achieving a 100 billion dollars by 2020.

So far, discussions have been taking place under two fronts. The Green Climate Fund, whose host and board have been decided upon, has been discussing the business model of the fund. Meanwhile, talks on long-term finance (LTF) in the past year looked at how both the public and private sectors can mobilize a US \$100 billion by 2020. While discussions have been happening

Key abbreviations

AWG-LCA: Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention
 AWG-KP: Ad hoc Working Group on further commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol
 ADP: Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action
 SBSTA: Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
 SBI: Subsidiary Body for Implementation
 COP: Conference of the Parties
 CMP: Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
 REDD: Reducing emissions from avoiding deforestation and degradation in developing countries

under both groups, the GCF is nowhere close to the kind of funds it is expected to have. This trend is not expected to change much with developed countries still using the financial crisis as their primary excuse. The EU negotiator, while on the one hand welcomed the finance ministerial, has already warned against expecting any numbers being pledged on the table.

There is also a raging discussion on how much should be allocated for adaptation versus mitigation. So far, much of the focus has been on mitigation. Several LDCs and other developing countries have repeatedly iterated that while they are in the process of designing national adaptation plans (NAPs), nothing can move forward without the right amount of finance and much-needed capacity building to see their plans through.

Pre-2020 ambition

Under work stream 2 of the ADP, parties have been discussing the issue of how to close the gap that currently exists between Cancun commitments for 2020 and what would actually be needed to stay within a 2-degree target. This is called the ambition gap. Following several studies by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and others and pressure from developed countries, the issues that have remained the focus of pre-2020 discussions include aviation emissions, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and other short-lived climate agents such as methane and black carbon, forestry carbon offset and fossil fuel subsidies. Many of these are considered “low-hanging fruit” and “easy reduction” in developing countries, rather than tackling the more expensive CO₂ emission reductions from the industrial, transportation and energy sectors.

At the Bonn session in May this year, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) introduced a proposal that focuses on renewable energy and energy efficiency as options for increasing pre-2020 ambition. This has received mixed reaction from different parties. AOSIS is pushing for a decision on taking its proposal forward in Warsaw.

Yet another issue under pre-2020 ambition that is being lined up for a formal decision is HFCs. EU has pushed for parties to formally agree to move HFCs to Montreal Protocol. This has been opposed strongly by many developing countries including India. However, recent political signals from the US and China and the recent G-20 statement suggest that this issue maybe turning a corner. Depending on a decision, the UNFCCC may formally ask the Montreal Protocol to take up the issue of HFCs, and the Montreal Protocol may form a contact group to discuss the HFC phase down schedule.

Loss and damage

At the Doha COP, parties famously agreed to the highly

contentious issue of loss and damage. The US and other developed countries who have long feared the issue of liability in any form showing up at the negotiations, had to yield in to emotional pressure from their developing country counterparts at Doha to an agreement at Warsaw on this issue. Prior to the Doha COP, parties had already been discussing several elements such as the scope and institutions that would be needed to address loss and damage. But it was generally understood that more engagement was needed on these elements before an official decision at Warsaw.

Loss and damage, being discussed under the Subsidiary Body for implementation (SBI), ran into all kinds of trouble at the 38th session of SBI in June. It was unable to even adopt its agenda. This was primarily owing to Russia, Ukraine and other former Soviet countries who were angered over losing surplus emissions allowances, which these countries have long enjoyed owing to their collapsed economies in a post-1990 world. They wanted to add an agenda item that would particularly address decision-making under the UNFCCC which met with resistance from other parties. This deadlock, which continued over two weeks at the session that took place in Bonn prevented the agenda from getting adopted. This means that issues such as loss and damage will now have very little time for discussion at Warsaw. Special arrangements are being made to overcome this political deadlock and to make progress under the SBI.

Other issues

Owing to hardly any progress on SBI, with more time in their hands at the SBSTA, parties were able to make substantial progress on the issue of emissions reduction from avoiding deforestation and degradation (REDD). This was surprising for many since at least five different technical elements remained under contention in REDD. Parties could not agree on issues such as how emissions would be measured and reported, the financial mechanism of REDD, the extent to which indigenous people’s rights would be protected. With three draft decisions on REDD+ recommended for adoption by COP 19 and text on possible draft decisions on MRV and reference levels forwarded for further consideration in Warsaw, some said that Bonn may go down as “the session that opened the path for impressive progress on REDD+.”

Another issue that has also seen some progress is a new market mechanism (NMM) that will either complement existing market mechanism such as CDM or will add in more sectoral trading schemes. While there is still discussion on what exactly should be the scope and design of NMM, parties will be discussing the possibility of pilot projects for new market mechanisms at Warsaw.



WARSAW COP

Centre for Science and Environment
41, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 062, INDIA
Ph: +91-11-29956110 - 5124 - 6394-6399 Fax: +91-11-29955879
E-mail: cse@cseindia.org Website: www.cseindia.org
www.cseindia.org/equitywatch.htm / climatenoise.wordpress.org

03

References (viewed between September 13-15, 2013)

<http://www.rtcc.org/2013/06/17/finance-ministers-set-for-un-climate-talks-invite/>

<http://www.climatefinanceoptions.org/cfo/news/blog-climate-finance-cop19-looking-back-looking-ahead-3474>

<http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=6485>

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12580e.html>