

INDIA CLIMATE WATCH

CSM@Bonn3 (10-14 August 2009)

CSM will be reporting from all the negotiating sessions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) this year leading up to the Copenhagen (COP15) talks in December 2009. Follow our Daily Updates from the talks in addition to our monthly INDIA CLIMATE WATCH newsletter on the negotiations.

DAY 4 - THURSDAY 13th AUGUST

Headline News

Indian Delegation Head speaks to NGOs: "We have to be optimistic about Copenhagen. We are not fixed on our line of action for COP15 as yet - we will wait and see."

Where's the AMBITION? We need 85% reductions from 1990. We have only 18%. AOSIS asks some hard questions.

KISS (Keep it simple stupid): China asks negotiators from developed countries to keep the analysis for complicated emission targets simple in a general discussion.

For Japan, Less is more. But India has strong comments for Canada on weak targets, Micronesia for all Annex1 countries: Japan seems to think that more emission reductions are not necessarily good. India criticizes Canada's weak targets, says the numbers you provide are impossible. Micronesia and AOSIS push all for more.

Party flip-flop: In June, Parties gave in submissions for a revised negotiating text, and said they didn't want to 'attribute' submissions. Meaning that they did not want the submitting Party or bloc's name beside the text. But now trust has eroded enough for them to ask for 'attribution' again.

Key Issues of the Day

Stop and Go! A note before you proceed: Most meaty and weighty discussions take place in 'closed' sessions and therefore, one really has no way of knowing how discussions progress behind closed doors.

Tag Vier (Day Four): On the second-last day of negotiations, progress is equal to some minute changes to a portion of the revised negotiating text. Changes are under two sections: mitigation, and technology transfer and capacity building.

Despite the best efforts by the UNFCCC Secretariat to build trust among Parties, this appears to be the one thing that is lacking. The second major thing that is lacking is consensus.

In effect, the work done by Working Group Facilitators to consolidate the text has only made minor progress. They now need to table it, reorganize, consolidate, reorganize, consolidate...

Today the issue of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) - a portion of text under the Bali Action Plan (BAP), that details mitigation by developing countries (only in cases where finance and technology are provided) was discussed. The usual two-sided debate ensued with the same old North South suspects on either side. Pakistan made light of the many, many 'new' NAMAs that have come into discussions, likening their spread to a virus.

*The United States in this session alluded to the possibility of a new mechanism/s that would be included in Copenhagen, **in addition to** the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan. The US also said it was **not** willing to accept the Kyoto Protocol without NAMAs in it. The refusal to sign the Protocol indicates the lingering opposition within US political circles to the Kyoto Protocol. There is no doubt that the US has to come on board the UNFCCC this time - an assurance given several times by President Obama - but the second largest emitter in the world cannot expect a whole new framework tailor made to accommodate them. We will only see success at COP15 if the need for give and take by all Parties - large and small - is recognized.*

The session on technology transfer and capacity building met to discuss the re-revised text that the Facilitator and his team had worked hard on to get out (the time on the document says 6:50 am). Other than thanking the Facilitator for his efforts, Parties were rather stuck on the same issues, but this time under the valid excuse that they had not had the time to go through the text in detail. The co-chair of the G77 and China vehemently opposed expensive capacity building, saying that the only ones building capacity in the process were the foreign capacity builders themselves. She urged Parties to give in suggestions for local, indigenous and cost-effective solutions for capacity building.

The AWG-KP Chair gave up a consecutive lunch break, and met again with NGOs, this time on mechanisms; land use, land use change and forestry; methodological issues and potential consequences. Uncharacteristically, there were not many questions for the Chair or Coordinators, and most questions were answered with the pre-fix 'thank you (once again) for asking me such an easy question'.

By afternoon the head of the Indian delegation, Shyam Saran, met with international NGOs. He was accompanied by R.R. Rashmi, Joint Secretary MoEF, and Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Joint Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Shyam Saran answered a majority of the questions and ended on the note that for Copenhagen, "We are optimistic: we have to be".

The group on Annex I (developed country) targets for emission reductions met again today. New Zealand made a 48-clicks complicated presentation on their targets, and Sweden made one on the EU's targets.

The EU today came out and said 'even the most ambitious targets will not get us to 2 degrees'. So a top-down approach - using science as a guideline to set targets - is required.

Sure enough, New Zealand, Japan, Australia and Canada opposed this - they want a bottom-up approach, with Parties deciding to put out 'their own' targets.

Micronesia and the Alliance of Small Island States passionately pushed developed country Parties to increase their level of ambition, and to push for a 2 degree, 350 ppm, 2015 peak mandate in the negotiations. The young lady from Micronesia said 'we will keep saying the same thing till our voice is heard'.

Focus on GOI

Today was India's day out with NGOs at Bonn. Shyam Saran, head of the Indian delegation and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Climate Change answered most of questions, and R.R. Rashmi handled the more technical aspects.

On India's Solar mission and options for financing from this negotiation process: *Solar mission and other missions of the National Action Plan on Climate Change are not predicated by other countries providing finance. But if there is a global regime that will support this, it's well and good.*

Why did India oppose the proposal to borrow from MEF text in these negotiations? *India has been participating in international fora with the understanding that discussions from there won't come into the UNFCCC process. It will not be a copy-paste process. In addition, 2 degrees is a scientific view, and if global warming is taking place as it indeed is, then a reference to 2 degrees underscores the need for significant action.*

On Offset, Mechanisms to reduce emissions (CDMs): *Economy-wide emission reductions for developed countries cannot come from offsets alone. Should not be double counting, and there is a need to maintain the environmental integrity of the Kyoto process. As far as CDM reform, India advocates CDM reform in terms of programmatic CDM but not sectoral reform.*

Should there be a dual protocol at Copenhagen? *India does not as yet have a defined outcome on this. We need to see how this develops as the negotiations proceed.*

On levy-related to shipping and aviation fuel: *The UNFCCC has referred this to the IMO and ICAO. They need to evolve the principles by which this will work along with the specific mechanisms of Kyoto, not as according to the WTO guidelines.*

How are the negotiations proceeding so far? *The process until now is not as much as expected, but there is likely to be an acceleration in pace by Copenhagen.*

How is the process of negotiation proceeding so far? *This process of consolidation and of taking and tabling every Parties' views on the issue is an important part of the negotiations. Countries need to feel ownership for the text they will come out with.*

The US plans to use CDMs to offset emissions at least for the near future. What is your take on that? *We cannot say what the US should and should not do. But if it materializes, then the net reductions will be insignificant. And this is why there needs to be a greater level of ambition.*

In order for international organizations to make the case to countries such as the US on the issue of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), what is the concrete data that countries like India can provide - for us to make the case? If and when technology is a key component (we have not yet got down to the details in the negotiations), we need to create enabling environments through the UNFCCC process itself. This can include a UN Mechanism, and a Global Platform for Technology Transfer. But as for specific technological needs and data to support that, we still do not know.

On the current level of ambition: Bilateral and multilateral for certainly help to persuade developed country partners to adopt a more ambitious target.

Views on India

Global Wind Energy Council: Yes India does have big plans for solar energy, but as far as wind energy goes, India is a net exporter of wind turbines. However, there needs to be considerable amount of policy-level intervention on supporting incentive-based wind energy generation for the domestic market.

GWEC has heard of quite a few wind energy projects in India that are not performing as well as intended, because of capital-based incentives, or the wrong incentives. In addition, there is no boost from the central government for wind energy production through robust policy mechanisms. Whereas in reality, only token customs duty cuts for wind turbine parts are announced.

India might be willing to accept finance from the Kyoto mechanism, but has not asked for any so far, despite a solar mission being on the anvil for December. However, it is not yet clear on when the funds will materialize through this negotiation process.

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