

FIRST SESSION OF THE *AD HOC* WORKING GROUP ON LONG-TERM COOPERATIVE ACTION AND FIFTH SESSION OF THE *AD HOC* WORKING GROUP ON FURTHER COMMITMENTS FOR ANNEX I PARTIES UNDER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL: 31 MARCH – 4 APRIL 2008

The first session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWGLCA 1) and the fifth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (AWG 5) are taking place from 31 March to 4 April 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The AWGLCA was established by the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP 13), held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007, as a follow up process to the “Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention.” This new subsidiary body has been mandated to launch a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012. The AWGLCA must complete its work by COP 15 in 2009. At its first meeting, the AWGLCA is expected to focus on developing its work programme covering, among other things, mitigation, adaptation, technology and finance.

The AWG was set up by the first Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 1) in Montreal, Canada, in late 2005 to consider Annex I parties’ commitments beyond the Protocol’s first commitment period ending in 2012. At its fifth meeting, the AWG is expected to convene an in-session thematic workshop and initiate work on analyzing the means for Annex I parties to reach their emission reduction targets and identification of ways to enhance their effectiveness and contribution to sustainable development.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFCCC AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

Climate change is considered one of the most serious threats to sustainable development, with adverse impacts expected on the environment, human health, food security, economic activity, natural resources and physical infrastructure. Scientists agree that rising concentrations of anthropogenically-produced greenhouse gases in the Earth’s atmosphere are leading to changes in the climate. The Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),

completed in November 2007, finds with more than 90% probability that human action has contributed to recent climate change and emphasizes the already observed and projected impacts of climate change. It also analyzes various options for mitigating climate change.

The international political response to climate change began with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The UNFCCC sets out a framework for action aimed at stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference” with the climate system. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994, and now has 192 parties.

KYOTO PROTOCOL: In December 1997, delegates at COP 3 in Kyoto, Japan, agreed to a Protocol to the UNFCCC that commits developed countries and countries in transition to a market economy to achieve emission reduction targets. These countries, known under the UNFCCC as Annex I parties, agreed to reduce their overall emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels between 2008-2012 (the first commitment period), with specific targets varying from country to country.

Following COP 3, parties began negotiating many of the rules and operational details governing how countries will reduce emissions and measure their emission reductions. The process was finalized in November 2001 at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, when delegates reached agreement on the Marrakesh Accords. These Accords consisted of a package of draft decisions for adoption at COP/MOP 1 and laid down detailed rules: on the Protocol’s three flexible mechanisms; reporting and methodologies; land use, land-use change and forestry; and compliance. The Accords also addressed issues such as support for developing countries, including capacity building, technology transfer, responding to the adverse effects of climate change, and the establishment of three funds: the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Adaptation Fund.

COP 10: At COP 10, held from 6 to 17 December 2004 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, parties began informal negotiations on the complex and sensitive issue of the post-2012 period. As a result of these discussions, a seminar was held in Bonn in May 2005 to address some of the broader issues facing the climate change process.

COP 11 AND COP/MOP 1: COP 11 and COP/MOP 1 took place in Montreal, Canada, from 28 November to 10 December 2005. COP/MOP 1 took decisions on the outstanding operational details of the Kyoto Protocol, including formally adopting the Marrakesh Accords. The meetings also engaged in negotiations on long-term international cooperation on climate change.

COP/MOP 1 addressed possible processes to discuss post-2012 commitments and decided to establish a new subsidiary body, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG). COP 11 also agreed to consider long-term cooperation also under the UNFCCC “without prejudice to any future negotiations, commitments, process, framework or mandate under the Convention” through a series of four workshops constituting a “Dialogue” on the matter through to COP 13.

AWG 1 AND CONVENTION DIALOGUE 1: The AWG and Convention Dialogue each convened for the first time in Bonn, Germany, in May 2006, alongside the 24th meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB 24). The AWG adopted conclusions on “Planning of future work.” It identified the need to assemble and analyze information on a number of scientific, technical and socioeconomic topics to enhance common understanding of the level of ambition of further commitments for Annex I parties and of the potential for achieving these commitments.

During the first Convention Dialogue workshop, participants exchanged initial views, experiences and strategic approaches on the four thematic areas to be addressed during the Dialogue.

AWG 2 AND CONVENTION DIALOGUE 2: The second sessions of the AWG and the Convention Dialogue took place in November 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya, alongside COP 12 and COP/MOP 2. The AWG held an in-session workshop and agreed on a work programme focusing on the following three areas: mitigation potentials and ranges of emission reductions; possible means to achieve mitigation objectives; and consideration of further commitments by Annex I parties.

The second Convention Dialogue workshop engaged in discussions on “advancing development goals in a sustainable way” and “realizing the full potential of market-based opportunities,” including the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change.

In parallel, COP/MOP 2 carried out the first review of the Protocol under Article 9, and held discussions on a proposal by the Russian Federation on procedures to approve voluntary commitments for developing countries.

AWG 3 AND CONVENTION DIALOGUE 3: In May 2007, alongside SB 26, AWG 3 and the third Convention Dialogue workshop convened in Bonn, Germany. The AWG held a roundtable discussion on the mitigation potentials of policies, measures and technologies. It also adopted conclusions on the analysis of mitigation potential and agreed to develop a timetable to complete its work so as to avoid a gap between the first and subsequent commitment periods.

The third Convention Dialogue workshop involved sessions on adaptation and realizing the full potential of technology. It also began addressing the issue of what should happen procedurally after the Convention Dialogue workshops report to COP 13.

AWG 4 AND CONVENTION DIALOGUE 4: The first part of AWG 4 and the fourth and final Convention Dialogue workshop took place from 27-31 August 2007 in Vienna, Austria.

The AWG focused on mitigation potentials and possible ranges of emission reductions for Annex I parties. It adopted conclusions referring to some of the key findings of the IPCC Working Group III, including that global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak in the next 10-15 years and then be reduced to well below half of 2000 levels by the middle of the 21st century in order to stabilize atmospheric concentrations to the lowest level assessed by the IPCC. The AWG’s conclusions recognized that to achieve this level, Annex I parties as a group would be required to reduce emissions by a range of 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020.

The final Convention Dialogue workshop focused on bringing together ideas from the previous workshops and addressing overarching and cross-cutting issues, including financing. It also addressed next steps after COP 13.

COP 13, COP/MOP 3 AND AWG 4: COP 13 and COP/MOP 3 took place from 3-15 December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia, alongside the resumed fourth session of the AWG. The main focus of the Bali conference was on long-term cooperation, and negotiators spent much of their time seeking to agree on a two-year process, or “Bali roadmap,” to finalize a post-2012 regime by COP 15 in December 2009.

Under the Convention, negotiations on the follow up to the Convention Dialogue resulted in the establishment of the AWGLCA with a view to launching a comprehensive process on long-term cooperative action to be completed in 2009. COP 13 identified four areas for enhanced action to be addressed by the AWGLCA, namely mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology. Its decision also contains a non-exhaustive list of issues to be considered under each of these areas and calls for addressing a shared vision for long-term cooperative action.

At its resumed fourth session, the AWG focused on reviewing its work programme and developed a detailed outline for its activities and meetings for 2008-2009.

COP/MOP 3 considered preparations for the second review of the Protocol under Article 9 by COP/MOP 4 at the end of 2008. Delegates identified a number of issues to be addressed during the review, such as the Clean Development Mechanism, IPCC AR4, adaptation, effectiveness, implementation and compliance. They also requested the Secretariat to organize a preparatory workshop.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

MAJOR ECONOMIES MEETING: A second “Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change” was hosted by the US Government in Honolulu, Hawaii, from 30-31 January 2008. Representatives from 16 countries, the European Union and the United Nations (UN) focused on how to develop a detailed contribution in taking forward the roadmap agreed in December 2007 during the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali.

UNGA CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE: The need for a global agreement on climate change for the post-2012 period, the importance of collaborative partnerships, and the role of the United Nations system were the focus of discussions during a three-day “thematic debate” in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) from 11-13 February 2008. Member states commented, *inter alia*, on technology transfer, capacity building, reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries, the vulnerability of small island developing states, the role of public-private sector partnerships, “climate proofing” development assistance, the importance of energy efficiency, market mechanisms, clean technologies, financing for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, and the need to follow up on the Bali conference by designing and agreeing on an inclusive and effective post-2012 framework for global action.

UNFCCC WORKSHOPS: The UNFCCC Expert Group Meeting on Methods and Tools and on Data and Observations under the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change (NWP) was held from 4-7 March 2008 in Mexico City, Mexico. The meeting identified specific practical actions and recommendations on methods and tools, and data and observations for addressing impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

The UNFCCC Expert Group Meeting on Socioeconomic Information under the NWP was held from 10-12 March 2008, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting identified specific gaps and needs in integrating socioeconomic information into impact and vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning.