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Chile/Madrid Climate Change Conference: Wednesday, 11 December 2019

The Chile/Madrid Climate Change Conference continued with a series of high-level events, while several issues were addressed in closed-door discussions.

High-Level Event on Climate Emergency

Opening the event, Gonzalo Muñoz, High-Level Climate Champion, Chile, reminded that half a million people walked through Madrid last week asking for a shift from negotiation to implementation.

Johan Rockström, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said the “red thread” in climate science over the past 20 years is that we have underestimated risks. He stressed that 2°C is a planetary boundary, beyond which lies “Hothouse Earth.”

Minister Teresa Ribera, Spain, said the rule-based international order is being challenged, noting an increasing gap between “what we agreed to do and what we are doing.” She cautioned against accepting “any type of withdrawal” and called for “naming and shaming those who fear doing more.”

Jennifer Morgan, Greenpeace, urged political leaders to set emergency measures that drive down emissions at the pace and scale needed to stay below the 1.5°C carbon budget.

Greta Thunberg, youth activist, said there is no longer time to leave out science, noting that a carbon budget that gives a 67% chance of staying below 1.5°C will be exceeded in eight years. She underscored equity, highlighting that the richest 10% of the world’s population produce half of our emissions, and noted that since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, banks have invested 1.9 trillion dollars in fossil fuels.

Minister Carlos Rodríguez, Costa Rica, moderated a panel with parties and non-party stakeholders, including from youth and indigenous peoples’ constituencies. Panelists highlighted the need for: local-level activism and action; governments and companies to ensure equal dialogues with indigenous communities regarding their territories; Paris Agreement Article 6 guidance to enshrine language on gender equity and human rights; and a “rebooting” of society to “respond to the demands of our children.”

High-Level Stocktake of Pre-2020 Action

Moderator Mariana Castaño Cano outlined the purposes of the stocktake as improving understanding of pre-2020 collective efforts and identifying opportunities and lessons.

COP 25 President Carolina Schmidt underscored the importance of trust among parties to improve the implementation of the Paris Agreement. She stated her intent as COP President to work to appropriately recognize achievements and gaps regarding ambition during this COP.

UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary Ovais Sarmad underscored the importance of taking forward, and raising the ambition of pre-2020 commitments and of actions for the post-2020 period. Highlighting the need for trust in the process, he said that since the elements are in place, “what is left is to raise ambition.”

Climate Champion Muñoz outlined how the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action can help raise ambition, through: the Yearbook of Global Climate Action, which showcases past achievements; the Global Climate Action Portal, which tells of current initiatives; and the Climate Action Pathways, which show the future trajectory of non-state action.

Ministerial Stocktake of Mitigation Action: Calling on all to do more, Minister Ian Duncan, UK, reported that the UK legislated a net zero target to be achieved by 2050 and doubled its Green Climate Fund (GCF) commitment to help provide finance for adaptation and mitigation where it is most needed.

Minister Nur Masripatin, Indonesia, said her country’s “voluntary pre-2020 commitment” has been improved, including through fossil fuel subsidy reform and a biodiesel programme. She also stressed the importance of including all actors in implementing nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

In interventions from the floor, FARMERS called for attention to developing country and smallholder farmers who face particular challenges. YOUNGOs called for: aligning NDCs with the global goals outlined in the Paris Agreement; climate finance for youth-led projects; and regular stocktakes and accounting of emissions at all levels of governance.

The PHILIPPINES said the USD 100 billion climate finance goal is “grossly inadequate” to support adaptation needs of developing countries. CHINA called for an arrangement to fill pre-2020 implementation gaps so that they will not be carried over to the post-2020 period and add to the burden on developing countries.

Ministerial Stocktake on Support: Ministers from recipient and donor countries discussed parties’ efforts and ways to enhance climate action and support.

Minister Krista Mikkonen, Finland, underscored that the EU is taking its historical responsibility and leadership role seriously. With her country holding the EU presidency, she emphasized: the EU’s mobilization of climate finance has systematically increased, making it the largest contributor of public finance to developing countries; and the EU’s support for addressing access to climate finance and for innovation.

Minister Jeanne D’Arc Mujawamariya, Rwanda, requested all nations, and especially big emitters, to enhance their ambition and financial commitments to reach the collective USD 100 billion finance goal. She announced that Rwanda will submit its revised and more ambitious NDC in March 2020.

Minister Gale Rigobert, Saint Lucia, noted that the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C finds that risks of climate change are worse than previously projected and informs the need for rapid action well before 2030. She recalled the call by several participants at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit for a collective goal to provide more than USD 1 trillion of climate finance by 2025.

Ravi Shankar Prasad, India, pointed to the lack of pre-2020 ambition as “the elephant in the room.” He lamented that the GCF’s first replenishment pledges as well as total public finance commitments to developing countries “remain too small compared to what is required, which runs in the trillions.”

Alexandra Bonnet, France, highlighted France’s commitment to attain carbon neutrality by 2050. She emphasized France’s mobilization of EUR 5 billion, and the doubling of its GCF contributions, which she underscored as key for building trust.

In interventions from the floor, parties and stakeholders identified challenges and proposed solutions. On NDC implementation, the SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME stressed capacity building as an essential driver and identified a need for ideas on how to engage the private sector.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES suggested that the success of COP 26 will depend on the engagement of cities in NDC preparation.

MALAYSIA, as well as Climate Justice Now! (CJN!) and Climate Action Network (CAN) for ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs, stressed the need for concrete arrangements to close the pre-2020 ambition and implementation gaps, with CJN! expressing support for a work programme and CAN suggesting that this programme could be part of the second periodic review of the long-term global goal and provide inputs for the first Global Stocktake.

Global Climate Action High-Level Event

COP 25 President Schmidt opened the meeting, emphasizing the need for all actors to “be part of the solution and contribute to reaching a turning point that enables us to hope for a better world.”

Artur Lorkowski, Special Envoy on Climate, COP 24 Presidency, emphasized that governments must demonstrate political leadership, long-term visions, and adopt robust regulations that drive climate action.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres outlined priorities for stepping up climate action, *inter alia*: addressing the social dimensions of climate change; cutting coal plant capacity and fossil fuel subsidies; and shifting finance flows towards sustainable investment.

Climate Action Dialogue: Musonda Mumba, Global Partnership of Forest and Landscape Restoration, moderated a discussion with Ana Patricia Botín, Banco Santander, and Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland. Botín announced that Santander will become carbon-neutral in 2020. Robinson stressed that the rest of the banking sector remains unsustainable, and called for further leadership.

Message from Space to Earth: Minister Pedro Duque, Spain, hosted a dialogue between Guterres and Luca Parmitano, current International Space Station Commander. Speaking from space via video link, Parmitano called for “vision” from leaders and politicians and spoke of being witness to the planet’s “incredible fragility.”

Stories of A Time of Climate Emergency: Mayor Mohamed Sefiani, Chefchaouen, Morocco, said more than 10,000 cities and local governments have committed to action under the Global Covenant of Mayors, and noted the need for additional support to “localize” the NDCs and implement climate change projects.

Brianna Fruean, Samoan youth representative, spoke of the fear of losing her grandmother’s island, expressing hope that its beauty can also inspire hope for preserving it.

Wang Shi, Vanke Co., shared how his real estate company had adopted new construction techniques that help reduce timber use and emissions.

Pre-2020 Global Climate Action Update: Climate Champion Muñoz shared the results from the Action Agenda in 2019, including: three regional climate weeks; recommendations from the Technical Examination Process to policymakers; and Chile’s Climate Ambition Alliance, launched at the UN Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit with 66 countries, 10 regions, 93 businesses, and 12 investors committed to reaching net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier.

In the panel discussion, local government, business, and financial sector representatives highlighted the need for, *inter alia*: parties to engage local governments in NDC revision; the corporate change to focus “not just on profit, but on having the right impact on people and the planet”; and the markets aligning investments portfolios with the 1.5°C target.

Several countries called for extending the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action beyond 2020, especially to provide transparency on the implementation of commitments.

Closing: COP 25 President announced that 39 countries have committed to including oceans in their future NDCs and that the UN Climate Action Summit “Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience” initiative is now part of the Global Climate Agenda, with 118 countries contributing.

Claire O’Neill, COP 26 President-Designate, UK, described 2020 as “the year of action.” Noting the importance of non-party stakeholders in shaping the agenda, she invited all actors to join the Climate Ambition Alliance on the road to COP 26.

CMA 2

Matters Relating to Finance: Adaptation Fund: Contact Group Co-Chair Fiona Gilbert (Australia) informed that the Adaptation Fund received two new financial pledges of USD 15 million from Switzerland and USD 32 million from Germany this week.

The contact group heard a report back from party-led informal consultations. Palestine, for the G-77/CHINA, restated the group’s view supporting no action at this time. The EU highlighted the need to acknowledge that the Adaptation Fund serves the Paris Agreement and should therefore receive guidance from the CMA. Parties did not agree on a way forward. The Co-Chairs will report to the COP that no consensus nor conclusion could be found.

In the Corridors

Wednesday laid bare a “tale of two COPs,” showcasing optimism and anger. On plenary stages, ministers and other officials spoke of mitigation efforts and support for developing countries. Negotiators left Article 6 discussions, focused on share of proceeds and carryover of Kyoto credits, explaining that “it’s going better than expected so far.”

Yet anger bristled through venue hallways and onto the streets. Civil society disrupted proceedings through a mass protest and sit-in on a scale never before seen in the process. They called on developed countries to “step up and pay up,” echoing the calls of some delegates for an “honest stocktake” of pre-2020 ambition, with one noting that Annex I parties have barely decreased their emissions since 1990.

Some at the high-level stocktake were ready to leave history behind, given the three weeks left in “pre-2020 times.” But calls for a work programme that identifies gaps in implementation of pre-2020 commitments confirmed that, for others, bringing history on board after 2020 may be the only way forward.

Against the tepid pace of negotiations, the *cacerolazos* in the street echoed calls for action. If Paris gave hope that the climate regime had entered the “age of wisdom,” protests called out “the age of foolishness” before them.