



UNFCCC COP-10 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2004

On Wednesday, the high-level segment of COP-10 opened. In the morning, delegates heard statements from UN bodies and specialized agencies and regional groups. In the afternoon, the first high-level panel discussion was held, on "The UNFCCC after 10 years: accomplishments and future challenges." A contact group on the exchange of views on UNFCCC activities relevant to other intergovernmental meetings also took place.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

OPENING: COP-10 President González García urged delegates to recall the magnitude of the climate change problem and to redouble efforts to deliver outcomes expected from COP-10. He expressed confidence that, guided by common but differentiated responsibilities, ministers would take action in the global effort to combat climate change.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Joke Waller-Hunter highlighted achievements of the UNFCCC since its entry into force in 1994. She noted that despite efforts, CO₂ concentrations are rising at an increasing rate and climate change impacts are already evident. She emphasized the need for planning the next steps.

Klaus Töpfer, on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, urged delegates to look beyond 2012 and address the longer-term challenge to promote low-carbon energy sources, low greenhouse-gas-emitting technologies and renewable energy. He emphasized that without mitigation, adaptation will become an insurmountable task.

Néstor Kirchner, President of Argentina, said climate change will increase poverty, noting that the poorest and most vulnerable countries have done the least to cause climate change, but are the ones that suffer most. He stressed that while developing countries bear the cost of foreign debt, rich countries fail to meet commitments on climate change and pay off their "environmental debt." He also said developing countries have the right to moral persuasion, and that as emissions increase in developed countries, citizens in developing countries often struggle to survive.

STATEMENTS FROM UN BODIES AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES: Michel Jarraud, WMO Secretary-General, outlined his organization's contributions to climate change processes, underlining the value of climate observation, monitoring and early warning activities.

Noting the 2005 review of progress of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director, stressed the impacts of climate change on vulnerable countries and described UNEP's role in promoting sustainable development and changing consumption and production patterns.

Rajendra Pachauri, IPCC Chair, stated that the Synthesis Report of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) will be available in October 2007, and suggested that COP-13 be moved

back three to four weeks to allow Parties to have time to review the AR4.

Zéphérin Diabré, UNDP Associate Administrator, emphasized that entry into force of the Protocol is a key first step on the path to a lower greenhouse gas-intensive society. He noted that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is not possible unless climate-related risks are significantly managed and reduced.

Noting that hundreds of millions of people suffer from hunger, David Harcharik, FAO Deputy Director-General, drew attention to the impact of climate change on global food security. He called on the international community to drastically increase efforts to reduce emissions from fossil fuels and deforestation, and underscored the need to help vulnerable societies cope.

Leonard Good, CEO and Chair of the GEF, commended the UNFCCC for its achievements, and underscored the need to address adaptation. He drew attention to the GEF's climate-related work, and noted that negotiations for the GEF's replenishment will begin in 2005.

Ian Johnson, World Bank Vice-President, said human-induced climate change will undermine long-term economic prospects and the ability of the poor to escape poverty. He raised the need to limit emissions from major greenhouse gas emitters in both developing and developed countries in an equitable manner, and stressed the importance of adaptation.

Marcel Boisard, UN Institute for Training and Research Executive Director, called for urgent measures to respond to capacity-building needs, especially for LDCs.

Grégoire de Kalbermatten, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Deputy Executive Secretary, said efforts to strengthen synergies between the UNCCD, UNFCCC and Convention on Biological Diversity include joint work programmes, consultative fora, and country-level synergy workshops to implement the three Conventions.

STATEMENTS FROM REGIONAL GROUPS: The REPUBLIC OF KOREA, for the Environmental Integrity Group, urged developing and developed countries to make efforts within their own capabilities and explore new and flexible mechanisms to address climate change.

EL SALVADOR, for Central American countries, highlighted the vulnerability of her region, noting that it has recently suffered severe weather events. She said ecological and social fragility constitutes a challenge to sustainable development and hoped that funding will be available for adaptation to climate change, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

TANZANIA, for LDCs, said that LDCs still need to resolve outstanding issues on funding for the implementation of national adaptation programmes of action.

KENYA, for the Africa Group, highlighted the urgency of adaptation, and emphasized the need to operationalize the Special Climate Change Fund.



The NETHERLANDS, for the EU, said the last decade and the entry into force of the Protocol have provided the foundations for increased international action on climate change. He explained that the EU will soon start its own emissions trading scheme and urged non-ratifying developed countries to make comparable mitigation efforts during the first commitment period.

PANEL 1 – “THE UNFCCC AFTER 10 YEARS: ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES:”

The high-level panel discussion was moderated by Sonia Tschorne Berestesky, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Chile. Following presentations by panelists, the floor was opened to comments by Parties.

Panel statements: Jiang Liu, Vice-Minister of the State Development and Reform Commission, China, said COP-10 provides the opportunity for a shift from negotiations and rule-making to implementation and concrete action. He said sustainable development requires progress on both mitigation and adaptation, and innovative strategies for technology transfer. He stressed that negotiations should be guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

A. Raja, Minister of Environment and Forests, India, expressed concern regarding growth in developed countries' emissions and said greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries will grow if they are to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. He also emphasized that proposals for future actions should not include new categories of Parties in the UNFCCC.

Yuriko Koike, Minister of Environment, Japan, said Japan is undertaking a review of its climate change policy programme. She stressed that additional policies and measures in the energy sector are required to meet Japan's reduction targets, while maintaining economic growth. Koike noted that Japan has undertaken seminars on future climate issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

Martin Puta Tofinga, Minister of Environment, Soil and Agriculture, Kiribati, noted that SIDS are some of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change and urged Parties that have not yet ratified the Protocol to do so. He supported an open and frank dialogue on ways forward, drawing on inputs from civil society.

Alexander Bedritzky, Chief of Hydrometeorology and Environment, the Russian Federation, said Parties face many challenges, including how to effectively measure the implementation of quantitative reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, noting that a five-year period is too short to monitor emissions trends. Bedritzky supported voluntary commitments and stressed the need for collective action to address the challenge of climate change.

Stating that climate change is the world's most serious threat, Pieter van Geel, State Secretary for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Netherlands, called for limiting global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels, and emphasized that this goal should guide future international efforts. Noting that postponing action will make adaptation more difficult, he called on countries to start considering future commitments.

Paula Dobriansky, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, US, underscored her country's commitment to the UNFCCC and highlighted efforts to combat climate change, including through multilateral scientific and technological initiatives. She stressed that economic growth and environmental protection should go hand-in-hand.

Discussion: QATAR said the pressing needs of developing countries should be met through full implementation of commitments by Annex I Parties, including on capacity building, technology transfer and financial support. GERMANY emphasized that to prevent an increase in temperature of more than 2 degrees Celsius, emissions must be halved by 2050, and a binding medium-term goal to reduce emissions by 2020 should be discussed. He urged the US to reduce its emissions to 1990 levels according to its UNFCCC commitment and said the decoupling of GDP and greenhouse-gas emissions growth in developing countries must be achieved. Noting that the future of the planet is at stake, LUXEMBOURG stressed the urgent need to halt

the growth of global emissions within two decades. BRAZIL supported discussing future actions and a negotiating mandate for 2012, while respecting the historical responsibilities of developed and developing countries. IRELAND, FRANCE, SWEDEN and MICRONESIA supported a prompt, comprehensive and open dialogue on the future of the climate change process. Announcing that his country will soon ratify the Protocol, PAKISTAN recommended engaging non-Parties and maintaining a regime architecture that is sufficiently flexible and open to allow late entrants. CANADA stressed the importance of multilateral action.

BENIN emphasized the importance of sustainable development, poverty alleviation and adaptation for LDCs. The PHILIPPINES urged timely and consistent delivery of resources, enhanced systems of technology transfer and capacity building. SWEDEN said targets and timetables are important and can go hand-in-hand with economic growth. NEPAL sought to accelerate economic development with energy efficiency and hoped to attract investment for clean development. BANGLADESH urged developed countries to take action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and support those who are vulnerable to sea-level rise. BELGIUM expressed concern about the rate of climate change and drew attention to the social and economic consequences that will result if urgent collective action is not taken.

BARBADOS requested delegates to be mindful of UNFCCC Article 4.8 (adverse effects), and provide support to SIDS. MICRONESIA emphasized that the urgent adaptation needs of SIDS should not be “mixed-up” with those of oil-producing countries. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, with the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, noted increased hurricane intensity. NAMIBIA said recurrent drought and desertification make his country vulnerable to climate change, and urged all UNFCCC Parties to comply with their obligations.

COP CONTACT GROUP

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON UNFCCC ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS:

This contact group was chaired by José Romero (Switzerland). Delegates discussed possible input to the relevant intergovernmental processes. The US, opposed by AOSIS, said conclusions should only state that an exchange of views occurred and, with SAUDI ARABIA and INDIA, said reporting by the Secretariat must only be on activities on which there is consensus among the Parties. The EU, opposed by SAUDI ARABIA, said: COP-11 should be updated on the outcomes of the events in question; the COP should be noted as a resource body for the Commission on Sustainable Development discussions on energy and climate change; and that the conclusions should refer to a miscellaneous document reflecting the EU's intervention in Plenary. AOSIS, supported by the EU, and opposed by the US, JAPAN and SAUDI ARABIA, proposed draft text that includes views of Parties given in Plenary. The US, SAUDI ARABIA and INDIA cautioned against negotiating the outcomes of processes before they begin.

Following a break, delegates reconvened to consider new text drafted by Chair Romero. AOSIS expressed disappointment that none of the views expressed in his group's submission were reflected in the new draft text. SAUDI ARABIA said he could only accept text that states that an exchange of views was held on UNFCCC activities relevant to other intergovernmental meetings and that requests the Secretariat to report on these activities. Chair Romero said new text will be drafted and discussed.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Although the negotiations at COP-10 have struggled to come up with provisions on future commitments, high-level statements demonstrate that governments are indeed reflecting seriously about the next commitment period and future actions. Observers remarked that, while the day seemed quiet, a highly charged “Friends of the President” group was milling over the bracketed draft decisions in a sheltered room upstairs in La Rural. This group is also discussing the contested seminars on future actions, and are expected to come with a “package” deal to the COP on Friday.