

BANGKOK CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS: 28 SEPTEMBER - 9 OCTOBER 2009

From 28 September to 9 October 2009, the first part of the seventh session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (AWG-LCA 7) and the first part of the ninth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 9) are taking place in Bangkok, Thailand. These sessions form part of ongoing negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol to enhance international climate change cooperation. The negotiations are scheduled to conclude at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009.

The AWG-LCA is expected to continue focusing on its negotiating text. The scenario note (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/12) prepared by Chair Michael Zammit Cutajar (Malta) indicates that in order to achieve an ambitious, effective and fair outcome in Copenhagen, the AWG-LCA is required to generate "a substantially shorter negotiating text" that concentrates negotiations on elements that the parties deem politically essential. The main documents for the session include the revised negotiating text resulting from AWG-LCA 6 (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1), and a document reflecting efforts by parties at an informal meeting held in Bonn, Germany, in August and by facilitators, under their own responsibility, to make the negotiating text more manageable (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2) by reordering and consolidating its contents.

The first part of AWG-KP 9 is expected to focus on the aggregate scale of Annex I parties' emission reductions in the post-2012 period and the contribution of Annex I parties to this scale. While the AWG-KP had agreed in its work programme (FCCC/KP/AWG/2008/8) to adopt conclusions on these issues at its seventh and eighth sessions, they are still under consideration. In accordance with the work programme, AWG-KP 9 is also expected to continue considering issues relating to means to reach emission reduction targets, relevant methodological issues and potential consequences, and to consider rules and modalities of possible improvements, as well as any draft COP/MOP decisions or draft Protocol amendments.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFCCC AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

The international political response to climate change began with the adoption of the UNFCCC in 1992, which 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.

In December 1997, delegates at COP 3 in Kyoto, Japan, agreed to a Protocol to the UNFCCC that commits industrialized 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. The Kyoto Protocol entered into force on 16 February 2005 and now has 184 parties.

In 2005, the first Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (COP/MOP 1) held in Montreal, Canada, established the AWG-KP on the basis of Protocol Article 3.9, which mandates consideration of Annex I parties' further commitments at least seven years before the end of the first commitment period. In addition, COP 11 agreed in Montreal to consider long-term cooperation under the Convention through a series of four workshops known as "the Convention Dialogue," which continued until COP 13.

BALI ROADMAP: COP 13 and COP/MOP 3 took place in December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia. The focus of the Bali conference was on long-term issues. These negotiations resulted in the adoption of the Bali Action Plan, which established the AWG-LCA with a mandate to focus on four key elements of long-term cooperation identified during the Convention Dialogue: mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology. The Bali Action Plan contains a non-exhaustive list of issues to be considered under each of these areas and calls for articulating a "shared vision for long-term cooperative action."

The Bali conference also resulted in an agreement on a two-year process, the Bali Roadmap, which covers negotiation "tracks" under the Convention and the Protocol and sets a deadline for concluding the negotiations at COP 15 and COP/MOP 5, to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. The

two key bodies under the Bali Roadmap are the AWG-LCA and the AWG-KP, which held four negotiation sessions in 2008: April in Bangkok, Thailand; June in Bonn, Germany; August in Accra, Ghana; and December in Poznań, Poland.

AWG-LCA 5 & AWG-KP 7: From 29 March - 8 April 2009, AWG-LCA 5 and AWG-KP 7 convened in Bonn, Germany. The main objective of the session was to work towards negotiating text under both AWGs.

The AWG-LCA considered a note prepared by the Chair to focus negotiations on the fulfillment of the Bali Action Plan and on the components of the agreed outcome (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/4, Parts I and II). Discussions at AWG-LCA 5 focused on further elaborating elements for a draft negotiating text to be prepared by the Chair for the next AWG-LCA session in June 2009.

AWG-KP 7 focused on emission reductions by Annex I parties under the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012 and on legal issues, including possible amendments to the Protocol. The AWG-KP also considered the other issues in its work programme, including: the flexibility mechanisms; land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF); and potential consequences of response measures. The AWG-KP agreed to request its Chair to prepare two documents for the June session: a proposal for amendments to the Protocol under Article 3.9 (Annex I parties' further commitments); and a text on other issues, such as LULUCF and the flexibility mechanisms.

AWG-LCA 6 & AWG-KP 8: From 1-14 June 2009, AWG-LCA 6 and AWG-KP 8 convened in Bonn, Germany, in conjunction with the 30th sessions of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice.

AWG-LCA 6 concentrated on developing negotiating text, using a Chair's draft (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/8) as the starting point. During the session, parties clarified and developed their proposals and the main outcome was a revised negotiating text (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1), which is nearly 200 pages long and covers all the main elements of the Bali Action Plan.

AWG-KP 8 continued considering Annex I parties' further commitments under the Protocol. Discussions focused on proposals by various parties for Annex I countries' aggregate and individual emission reduction targets beyond 2012. The AWG-KP agreed to continue discussions on these as well as on other issues, such as LULUCF and the flexibility mechanisms, based on documentation prepared by the AWG-KP Chair.

By the end of the June session, the Secretariat had also received five submissions from parties for a new protocol under the Convention, and twelve submissions concerning amendments to the Kyoto Protocol, proposed for adoption in Copenhagen.

INFORMAL AWGs: From 10-14 August 2009, the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP held informal intersessional consultations in Bonn, Germany.

For the AWG-LCA, the focus was on how to proceed with the revised negotiating text (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.1). After a week of consultations, the AWG-LCA began to produce reading guides, tables, matrices and non-papers (FCCC/AWGLCA/2009/INF.2) aimed at making the negotiating text more manageable.

Under the AWG-KP, discussions continued on Annex I parties' emission reductions beyond the first commitment period ending in 2012. In addition, parties resumed consideration of texts related to potential consequences and other issues in the

AWG-KP's work programme. The results of this work are reflected in revised documentation prepared by the Chair for Bangkok. At the close of Bonn III, delegates in both AWGs seemed increasingly aware of the fact that the negotiating time remaining before Copenhagen is limited, and that important progress will be needed during the Bangkok meeting.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE-3: The World Climate Conference-3 convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 31 August - 4 September 2009, under the theme "Better climate information for a better future." The conference was attended by more than 2,000 participants, including seven heads of state and several ministers.

The participants attended plenary, parallel and roundtable sessions on a variety of topics. During the high-level segment participants approved, by acclamation, a conference declaration establishing a Global Framework for Climate Services, to strengthen production, availability, delivery and application of science-based climate prediction services.

FOURTH MEETING OF THE LEADERS' REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAJOR ECONOMIES FORUM ON ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: The Fourth Meeting of the Leaders' Representatives of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change (MEF) took place from 17-18 September 2009 in Washington DC. The MEF was launched by the US President Obama in March 2009 to facilitate dialogue among major developed and developing economies and generate political leadership needed to achieve a successful outcome in Copenhagen. The meeting was attended by officials from seventeen major economies, as well as the UN and Denmark. According to the Chair's summary, participants exchanged views on adaptation, mitigation, measuring, reporting, and verification (MRV), and technology, and agreed that the Forum continues to provide a useful contribution to the preparations for COP 15.

GREENLAND DIALOGUE FOLLOW-UP: From 19-20 September 2009, Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard invited several key ministers for an informal gathering in New York with the objective of maintaining momentum in the international climate change negotiations. The meeting continued the annual climate summit, known as the Greenland Dialogue, providing an informal setting for ministers to openly discuss the most pressing issues leading up to COP 15 in Copenhagen.

UN HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE: On 22 September 2009, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hosted an all-day high-level event on climate change for Heads of State and Government at UN Headquarters in New York. According to the Secretary-General's summary, the summit sent a clear message on the need for a comprehensive deal in Copenhagen and on ensuring: enhanced action to assist the most vulnerable in adaptation; ambitious emission reduction targets for industrialized countries; nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) by developing countries with necessary support; significantly scaled-up financial and technological resources; and an equitable governance structure.