

Submission by Nepal on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group on Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings (AIM) pursuant to decision FCCC/SBI/2012/15, paragraph 238

The Least Developed Countries Group (LDC Group) appreciates the recent measures and practices, like deferral of some agenda items to future sessions and improved flow of information regarding the scheduling of informal consultations, which have been introduced in an effort to improve the overall functioning of the intergovernmental process of the UNFCCC. To some extent, these efforts helped in reducing the problems faced by small delegations of the LDC Group for effective participation. The LDC Group believes that these measures have led to improvements in the efficiency of the UNFCCC negotiation process. However, due to the complexity of the process and the intensity of the work foreseen for the ADP by 2015 and beyond, there are a number of areas that could be further improved, particularly in relation to allocating time for in-depth consideration of issues, engagement of high level political leaders and ability of the LDCs to participate effectively in the large number of meetings at an appropriate level of representation. Also, the number of bodies and lengthy agendas in the UNFCCC negotiations, the role of the observers, and financial matters need to be effectively managed.

The arrangements for intergovernmental meetings must take into account the recent changes in the negotiations, particularly the establishment of the ADP and the challenges, which the negotiating process might encounter in terms of timely conclusion of the 2015 agreement. Meaningful arrangements should be made to deal with the scale, scope and urgency of the ADP while balancing with negotiations under other Subsidiary Bodies.

The following section of this submission suggests a number of measures that could be introduced to improve the overall functioning of the intergovernmental process.

Better arrangements for effective high-level engagement

Active participation by the ministers in the UNFCCC negotiations is vital as they hold the political mandate for making final decisions on some decisive issues. Therefore, Parties should discuss how to actively engage high-level political decision makers in the process. The preponderant view of the LDC Group is that ministerial attendance at sessions of the COP and the CMP in the high-level segment is important for underlining the Parties' political commitment to the intergovernmental negotiation process and for raising its profile. However, the arrangements for ministerial attendance need to be carefully balanced with on-going technical negotiations.

The LDC Group has suggested two focused ministerial meetings prior to Warsaw: A ministerial meeting on increasing pre 2020 mitigation ambition and the ministerial meeting on scaling up climate finance (as decided in Doha). These meetings should move beyond making general statements and be effective in addressing the paramount concerns related to

mitigation and finance. These meetings should aim to build political momentum towards focused ministerial engagement with specific outcomes at COP 19.

It is essential that the process of involving ministers is transparent and inclusive. Also, there should be no parallel negotiations (on the same issues) on the technical and the political level and the process must ensure a proper interface between technical and political negotiations. The LDC Group also believes that the expected outcomes of such meetings should be clearly defined and the result should provide the basis to further advance and define specific action leading to a high level summit at COP 20.

In terms of participation, ministers from ministries of finance, planning and environment should also be invited. The participation of the additional ministers from LDCs should also be financially supported.

Scheduling of additional negotiating sessions

In the current negotiations, considerable work remains to be completed under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). A number of important work programmes have been established including the extended work programme on loss and damage, the work programme to further the understanding of the diversity of the nationally appropriate mitigation actions under SBI. SBSTA includes important work programmes such as the work programme on clarification of quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets of developed country parties. Among others, both subsidiary bodies will assist the COP in conducting the first Review with the support of the structured expert dialogue for the scientific consideration of the inputs. As such, arrangements for SB meetings should consider the high volume of workload and provide sufficient time for Parties to come to meaningful conclusions.

The LDC Group sees the establishment of the ADP as an opportunity for all Parties to come together to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention in the period both before and after 2020. Decision 1/CP.17, which established the ADP, gives Parties a unique opportunity in the history of the climate change negotiations to plan holistically on a much longer time frame than the annual COP cycle normally allows. This longer than usual deadline, however, may lull Parties to postpone decisions from one year to the next leaving insufficient time at the end of 2015. This must be avoided at all costs. Therefore, arrangements for negotiations under ADP must reflect a balanced negotiating approach, pace, intensity and progress of both workstreams and in terms of their procedural and substantive processes. Both workstreams needs allocation of negotiating time for all the issues. It is, therefore, necessary that arrangements for the sessions be made to facilitate the heavy workload and completion of the mandate of the Durban Platform.

As a way forward, the LDC Group would like to suggest that Parties agree on a permanent extra intersessional meeting rather than ad hoc arrangements for extra sessions. The LDC Group believes that the current uncertainty over extra sessions lead to difficulties in the negotiations and affect participation and outcomes. For example, most LDC negotiators are

responsible for a number of other multilateral negotiations due to limited capacity in their countries. Due to uncertainty in the extra sessions under UNFCCC those delegates may prioritise other responsibilities leading to lack of participation from his/ her country. A permanent extra session would allow Parties to better organise and plan the annual negotiating arrangements. Also, a permanent extra session will ensure effective participation particularly by the LDCs. The LDC Group suggests that the extra meeting must be at least two weeks long and can be organised around September every year.

Arrangements during negotiating sessions

Climate change negotiation has become increasingly complex over the years. The LDC Group is concerned that it has become a norm that negotiations run over time at every COP. Negotiations, particularly at COPs and CMPs, must end as planned in the relevant agenda for that particular session. Also, meeting arrangements must ensure that there is no late night negotiating sessions. However, this should not mean less time for negotiations. Arrangements must be put in place to use maximum time available for effective negotiations and outcomes.

The arrangements during negotiating sessions should also allow sufficient time for Group coordination meetings. Group coordination meetings are particularly important for the LDCs that are underrepresented in the negotiations to plan and strategize together. The two-day preparatory meeting for the LDC Group prior to each intersessional and COP meetings needs to be continued to be supported.

The LDC Group also recommends regular stocktaking sessions during negotiations. Stocktaking sessions will enable the Parties to evaluate the bigger picture and pay attention to those that need more negotiating time and space for final outcomes.

Informal meetings convened under the process with the purpose of facilitating informal exchanges of views between Parties - and other stakeholders - also need to avoid being perceived as non-inclusive. Limited space available for meetings has been recognised as one reason for inability to open the meeting for all the stakeholders. One way of enhancing the inclusiveness with respect to participation is to set aside a number of large rooms for such meetings. Public webcasts of the main sessions also help in enhancing inclusiveness. Also, publicly available documentation enhances the transparency of informal meetings.

For the LDC Group, it is important that documentation is available in hard copies during meetings as most of the LDC delegation members do not possess new technology necessary to use soft versions of the documents.

Support for smaller delegations

The LDC Group emphasises that the entire negotiating process must be open, transparent, party-driven, fully participatory and inclusive. In order to facilitate effective participation of all regional groups and, in particular, smaller delegations among them, it is important that Parties reflect carefully on how best to organize the upcoming meetings in a fruitful and

productive manner. Sufficient financial support to LDC's delegations is key to ensuring full and effective participation.

Three delegates from each LDC are funded for the COP meetings and two each for intersessional meetings. However, the complex and highly technical issues as well as the large number of meetings are tiring for small LDC delegations and lead to under representation of LDCs during the crucial negotiating sessions. Lack of funding for the LDC Group needs to be addressed effectively for the upcoming meetings. The LDC Group suggests that extra funding be made available for LDCs, at least to facilitate participation of three delegates for the intersessional meetings and four delegates for the COP meetings.

Observer organizations in the intergovernmental process

The climate negotiation process has become more complex than ever. Parties, observer States and organisations, academia, NGOs, CSOs and private sector all have a strong stake in the climate negotiations. The LDC Group supports the recent arrangements for effective participation by observer organisations and encourages further arrangements to increase their participation. Arrangements for online documentation and virtual participation are important elements for those observers that are unable to travel to every meeting.

Adequate resources for the UNFCCC Secretariat

In order to take effective action for improvement of the intergovernmental process, the UNFCCC Secretariat requires additional financial resources. The LDC Group notes with deep concern that due to financial constraints, some recent sessions have been of informal nature, with no formal plenary meetings, no interpretations or webcast services and no official documents. Such limitations defeat the basic principles of the UN process. Therefore, the LDC Group calls for those Parties, that are able to do so, to make regular and sufficient financial contributions to the Secretariat. Without funding from Parties, the Secretariat does not have the means to carry out its mandated activities.

Finally, it is important that the progress on the measures taken to improve the intergovernmental process be reviewed regularly.

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