



COP17/CMP7
UNITED NATIONS
CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2011
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: PANAMA

Background

As mandated, the COP17/CMP7 Presidency has been holding a number of informal consultations in the run-up to Durban, in order to facilitate the work towards the success of that session in an inclusive and transparent manner. We have reported on these at the opening plenaries of the Ad hoc Working Groups (AWGs). The incoming Presidency wishes to use the opportunity of the Panama inter-sessional meeting to invite delegates to further informal consultations. The purpose is to conduct, in the most inclusive manner possible, informal interaction with delegates in which they are free to express their views on a number of cross-cutting issues that do not have a space within the work streams of the two AWGs. Time is limited and we need to make the most of it. We therefore wish to have an open engagement in a structured and focused manner.

As incoming Presidency, we have heard from the majority of delegates that delicate balances need to be struck between issues and within issues in order for Durban to have a balanced, fair and credible outcome. Once the balances are better understood, the possibility of putting together a balanced outcome may come within reach. At the very heart of putting a balanced outcome together is the question of how delegates view the future. It is not only pertinent for the decision on the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, but equally relevant for what we need to do under the Convention. In the climate change negotiations we have to work within a web of linkages and balances, driven by the urgency of making an impact. It is for the preservation of the multilateral system that we need to look for the end of the thread of this entanglement, to ensure that we strengthen our system by weaving together a solution that can take us forward together.

We hope that the informal consultations can be useful in this regard and develop a common understanding among delegates of where the balances will have to be struck if a successful outcome in Durban is to be achieved. We invite delegates to make use of this informal space to discuss the key issues that may help them to find solutions for the negotiating difficulties they are faced with in the AWGs.

Format of session

Two sessions of informal consultations will be held on the margins of the Panama session: one with stakeholders only and one with negotiators only. The consultations will be open-ended and delegates are encouraged to speak freely and articulate creative ideas. In order to have a focused and structured engagement, we have attempted to put forward a few questions that can guide delegates in their interventions. We believe that in responding to these questions, we can really come to the core elements that would help build a common understanding. Speakers should limit their interventions, which should preferably not be more than three minutes, to allow as many voices as possible to be heard. It is our sincere wish that delegates will not repeat their well-known stated positions.

Questions to address

1. The end of the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and the decision on the second commitment period have brought into sharp focus the question of the legal nature of the commitments undertaken as part of the long-term cooperative action under the Convention. Do Parties agree that we are working towards the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention to be reflected in a multilateral rules-based system that would be legally binding on all in the future? If so, how can we accelerate progress?
2. Do Parties agree that the KP second commitment period is an essential element in strengthening the collective response to climate change? Should there be no agreement on the amendment of the KP, how would it then be possible to maintain the continuity of the multilateral rules-based system we have built?
3. Since these issues straddle the mandates of the two AWGs and the COP and CMP, where could discussion on this matter most appropriately take place here in Panama and in Durban?