

COP 21 Plenary meeting
Saturday 5 December 2015 (6:00 p.m.)

Statement by Mr. Laurent Fabius, COP 21 President

Check against delivery

Madam Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,
Co-chairs, Dear Dan and Ahmed,

Like all of you, I carefully listened to your report, and took note of the draft agreement and draft decision you just presented to the COP

I would first like to thank and congratulate you, the Co-Chairs and all members of the Durban Platform group. You committed to conclude your work by Saturday 5 December at 12, and present your report to the COP immediately thereafter. You have respected this deadline: it is a good sign for the upcoming work.

During this short week – and the time before – all Parties worked tirelessly. Co-facilitators led work with a view to seeking streamlined wordings and reducing the number of options. The result of this work is this new basis for negotiations, agreed by all and containing many proposals for compromise.

This draft is a step forward, but between now and Friday we need to go deeper and get more concrete. This in effect means by Thursday at the latest because, as I have been informed by the secretariat we have to take into account the time needed for final legal revisions and translation. We therefore only have a few days up to Thursday, and, as we all know, we have a lot of work to do. The commitment and spirit of compromise that you have demonstrated this week will be essential in the days to come.

We now have to move to a new phase in this negotiating process launched in 2011 in Durban. I wish to ensure continuity in the negotiations. We must capitalize on our exchanges and negotiations conducted over the years, but we must also decide now, finding political agreements that will allow us to build a balanced and ambitious agreement.

As I told you when you gave me the honour of electing me as your President, this process will be transparent, inclusive and Party-driven.

As announced in my intervention on Wednesday before the ADP Contact Group, Ambassadors François Delattre and Philippe Lacoste, assisted by Mr. Michael Zammit Cutajar, consulted with all groups on the way forward. Based on the results of these consultations, I would like to submit a proposal on the organization of our work until the end of our Conference.

As COP 21 President, I therefore propose to establish an open-ended single-setting group to conduct informal consultations. The objective of these consultations will be to make progress on the text of the agreement and to facilitate compromise. The work of this group should lead to a draft agreement and draft decisions, which will then be forwarded to the COP for adoption on December, 11, in strict conformity with procedures.

I will chair this group myself, which we could call the "Paris Committee". I will convene the group at least once each day, and more frequently if necessary. Should I not be available, Ms. Laurence Tubiana would represent me. Each delegation will be able to choose its level of representation.

This group will work in accordance with three principles. First, nothing will be agreed until everything is agreed. The second is the principle of inclusiveness. And the third principle is transparency: As an unprecedented provision in the process, I believe, the discussions in the group will be broadcast on the screens of the conference site, unless the Committee decides otherwise, to allow everyone to follow the discussions and directions taken.

This group will determine the time at which text will be transmitted to a legal and linguistic review group, which I also propose to establish. This review is necessary to forward a final text to the COP in a timely manner.

To help move forward, I also propose to establish four informal working groups on cross-cutting issues whose resolution is key to reaching an agreement.

In order to progress rapidly, I have asked several ministers - who were willing to accept - to conduct, on behalf of the Presidency, informal consultations on these issues. I have no doubt that we will benefit from their authority, competence and sense of compromise.

First group: Support: means of implementation (finance, technology, capacity building. Proposed facilitators are Mr. Emmanuel Isozé Ngondet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Gabon, and Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, Environment Secretary of State of Germany.

Second Group: Differentiation, in particular with regard to mitigation, finance, transparency. Proposed facilitators are Ms. Izabella Teixeira, Minister of Environment of Brazil, and Mr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

Third Group: Ambition, including long-term goals and periodic review.

Fourth group: Acceleration of pre-2020 Action, Workstream 2 excluding pre-2020 finance, which will be addressed in the Support group.

I will announce later the facilitators of these third and fourth groups. Additional facilitators will be appointed, if necessary, to resolve any other significant issues that would require facilitation.

I will meet these colleagues if possible tomorrow morning to clarify the modalities of their work in the days to come. After that meeting, tomorrow afternoon, they will hold open meetings to hear the views of different Parties. These consultations will be open to all Parties, at the level they wish. These groups will report to the Paris Committee, which, as I mentioned earlier, will be broadcast. The consultations relating to Support and Differentiation will be held consecutively. The other two consultations will be conducted in parallel.

On Monday afternoon, I will open the first meeting of the Paris Committee where the first facilitators will present their initial findings.

After this exercise, the policy directions we would have agreed on will be translated into concrete text proposals. The group will mandate facilitators to prepare a draft text on the elements for which they are responsible.

To ensure transparency of the whole process, I will also convene stock-taking meetings in plenary sessions of the COP. They will be an opportunity to take stock of progress made including those considered elsewhere under the COP and the CMP.

As I mentioned, I propose the establishment of an open-ended legal and linguistic review group, composed of a core team of 11 representatives (two from each of the five UN regional groups and one representative of the small island developing States). The group will be chaired by two co-chairs, from an Annex I and a non-Annex I Party.

This is to ensure that the text is clear in legal and linguistic terms, including between the versions in the six official languages, and to ensure that there is full coherence and consistency between provisions in and across articles.

The legal and linguistic group shall present the results of its review, including recommendations in relation to the text of the agreement to the central group for consideration by latest Thursday, December 10. The recommendations that will be accepted by the Paris Committee will be incorporated in the text of the agreement to be submitted to the COP on Friday, December 11, 2015

I invite the coordinators of the regional groups to submit to the secretariat the representatives that they have nominated for the linguistic and legal review before the end of the day tomorrow.

I hope that this proposal will be acceptable to all Parties. I know that technical questions relating to these provisions were raised this afternoon during the consultations conducted with the different groups. These questions are useful and legitimate. We will respond in writing as soon as possible, before the holding of the first consultations.

I hear no objections, the proposal is therefore accepted.