



High-level Ministerial Dialogue on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action 21 November 2013 10:15-13:00

Summary by the Co-Chairs of the High-Level Ministerial Dialogue

The Conference of the Parties, at its eighteenth session, underlined the importance of high-level engagement on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. In response, the President of CMP/COP 19, H.E. Mr. Marcin Korolec, held a High-level Ministerial Dialogue on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action on Thursday, 21 November 2013 in Warsaw.

The President suggested three questions to focus the discussion:

- *What kind of change should a successful and meaningful 2015 agreement catalyze in the world and what elements of this agreement will secure such a change?*
- *How can the 2015 agreement be made to stand the test of time for all and remain durable while adaptable to changing circumstances?*
- *How can ambitious pre-2020 actions provide for a transitional phase towards the post-2020 world?*

The high-level dialogue was Co-Chaired by H.E. Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan (Singapore), and H.E. Mr. Tim Groser (New Zealand). More than 140 Ministers and Heads of Delegation participated.

In his opening remarks, the President recalled the mutual consent that the 2015-agreement will be under the Convention, legally binding and applicable to all. He reminded that the world expects leadership and cooperation on climate change, and called for setting aside differences and seizing the opportunity to provide direction to crafting a successful 2015 agreement.

Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, encouraged participants to take a high level and forward looking perspective on what is needed for a durable and ambitious agreement in 2015.

H.E. Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, shared that African countries are strongly committed to low carbon development and to response to impacts of climate change. He expressed concern about the need for stronger commitments for mitigation and support and called for scaling up public finance. He urged developed countries to show leadership and emphasized that Africa seeks a legally binding, balanced and comprehensive 2015 agreement, and a meaningful outcome to enhance economic diversification and engagement of local communities and the private sector.

The Co-Chairs invited Ministers and Heads of Delegation to engage in an open discussion with the view to clarify the issues around the work under the Durban Platform on Enhance Action and provide strategic guidance. High-level representatives from China, the United States, Venezuela, Ireland, Colombia and Fiji were invited to “break the ice” and catalyse the discussion.

Co-Chair Minister Vivian Balakrishnan of Singapore started off the session by reminding participants that Warsaw was halfway between Durban and Paris. He underscored two points, first, the need to have an ambitious outcome and close the ambition gap pre-2020, and second, the need to identify elements of the new agreement and implement the mandate from Durban in a balanced way covering all elements such as mitigation, adaptation, finance and means of implementation. He stressed that ambition, as well as past and current performance were essential for credibility when talking about a post-2020 regime. He emphasised that the Ministerial Dialogue was not a negotiating session. However, the ministers were needed to provide strategic guidance, sense of urgency and political momentum to the negotiations.

From the discussion, the following common threads emerged: an effective agreement maximizes participation and encourages all Parties to examine all areas for action; sustainable development and climate change are inextricably linked and need to be approached in cohesion; the contributions to the 2015 agreement while nationally determined will require some internationally determined framework of rules in order to come together. The agreement should be concise, future-proof and flexible.

The following paragraphs provide highlights of the key points made by the representatives who were invited to “break the ice”. It should be noted that the following paragraphs are by no means exhaustive or intended to capture the entirety of the various comments but only serves to highlight some of the key points made, from the perspective of the two Co-Chairs of the High-Level Ministerial Dialogue.

H.E. Mr. Xie Zhenhua (China) kicked off the discussions by expressing confidence in the multilateral process and reaffirming the strong will of China to contribute to common goals, while keeping in mind that sustainable development is a priority. He shared his belief that the Durban Platform should implement the Convention through enhanced action by all, taking into account historical responsibility. The two work streams should progress in a balanced way and be based on the four pillars of the Convention: mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology and capacity building. He emphasized that the Convention should also guide actions outside the UNFCCC. As the main outcome of COP 19, Mr. Xie envisaged a clear roadmap to ensure an agreement in 2015. He urged developed countries to increase ambition, and proposed to discuss three issues:

1. How can the 2015-agreement be designed to distinguish between responsibilities of developed and developing countries?
2. How should developed countries, given their historical responsibility, play a leading role and adopt further enhanced actions? What enhanced actions should developing countries adopt after 2020 and what challenges and obstacles they face?
3. What should be agreed in Warsaw to ensure that the pre-2020 ambition and progress build up credibility through enhanced implementation?

H.E. Mr. Todd Stern (United States of America), followed up stating that ambition begins at home, and provided examples of the efforts of the United States. He mentioned national efforts such as the President’s Climate Change Action Plan, emission standards for power plants, and efficiency standards for transportation. He also referred to international steps such as phasing down support to coal-fired power plants and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. Mr. Stern urged Ministers to phase down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol in cooperation with the UNFCCC. The 2015-agreement must send a strong signal to the private sector and feature a strong transparency mechanism.

Mr. Stern also identified four areas of convergence: 1. Full participation; 2. Nationally determined commitments; 3. Strengthened transparency regime; and; 4. The need to begin domestic processes now to be ready for Paris. In this context, Mr. Stern informed participants that the US will communicate their ambition for the 2015-agreement well in advance of Paris. Finally, he emphasized that future commitments cannot be defined on the basis of categories defined in 1992.

H.E. Ms. Claudia Salerno (Venezuela) focused on four points that should be tackled to ensure a successful agreement:

1. The 2015-agreement must be a rules-based system under the Convention, and the principles, rules, annexes and structure of the Convention will not be renegotiated;
2. The discussions under the Durban Platform should not prejudge the mandated options for the legal form: a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force;
3. Trust building is essential, and can be achieved only by fulfilment of current commitments, in particular those related to finance and technology;
4. Nationally determined actions will require international rules on accountability and compliance

H.E. Mr. Phil Hogan (Ireland) noted that in order to fulfil the Durban mandate, Warsaw must capture ideas for a process to deliver ambition, as well as milestones to reach an agreement in 2015. Common rules and a dynamic accounting framework applicable to all could be elaborated. In order to increase ambition, the UNFCCC could support voluntary initiatives and cooperate with the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs, as suggested by Mr. Stern.

H.E. Mr. Pablo Vieira (Colombia) urged all to face reality and act. He reminded that development would be constrained by climate change and that progress in Lima depends on progress in Warsaw. While the new agreement will be bottom-up, it must have a strong international regime to ensure comparability, transparency and adequacy. He referred to the warning by the IPCC that the window to reach the 2°C objective is rapidly closing and emphasized the need to find champions to trigger more action. He announced that Colombia wants to champion REDD-plus together with Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom.

H.E. Ms. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni (Fiji) shared that Fiji envisages a clear, predictable, flexible and rules-based 2015-agreement engaging all countries. The agreement should include fair differentiation, a spectrum of top-down commitments, bottom-up actions, a mechanism to maximize ambition, compliance system that takes into account national circumstances and a long-term investment framework for finance. Any approach to define commitments must be anchored on equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. As part of a wider package of COP decisions on implementation, she proposed an “eight-wheel” structure for the 2015-agreement, which should build upon existing infrastructure: 1. Objectives; 2. Mitigation and accounting; 3. Market mechanisms; 4. Adaptation; 5. Means of implementation; 6. Transparency of support; 7. Regular review and adjustment; 8. Compliance.

The icebreaking interventions catalysed a dialogue which featured remarks by twenty-six participants from the EU, AOSIS, Least Developed Countries, Japan, Brunei, Peru, Malaysia, Bolivia, Switzerland, Marshall Islands, Russia, Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, UK, India, Egypt, Palau, Norway, Iran, France, Netherlands, Indonesia, Slovenia, Portugal and South Africa. The discussions addressed the three focus questions, as well as issues highlighted by the icebreakers and exposed a rich spectrum of views and ideas on the scope, elements and function of the 2015-agreement, the means to increase ambition by 2020, the outcome of Warsaw and the process towards Paris. Parties were also given the opportunity to submit their written interventions after the conclusion of the High Level Dialogue. This opportunity was taken up by H.E. Ms. Leona Aglukqag, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian

Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, Canada; H.E. Ms. Wilma Mansveld, Minister of the Environment, the Netherlands; and H.E. Mr. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of Environment, Peru. Their contributions to the discussions are available at: <http://unfccc.int/meetings/warsaw_nov_2013/items/7896.php>.

2015-agreement

In relation to the 2015-agreement, many participants stated that it should be legally binding, applicable to all and contain an ambitious goal to limit global warming based on science. The participants shared the view that any new agreement should be in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention. Many participants expressed the view that the new agreement should also be ambitious and "fair" and many participants outlined proposals on how to achieve „fairness" through the 2015 agreement. There was a call for a comprehensive and compact negotiating text, including the elements needed to make it operational and effective as soon as possible.

While flexible enough to engage all countries and actors to take the maximum possible ambition, many considered that the 2015 agreement should respect the differences and keep a fair balance between mitigation, adaptation and means for implementation, including technology transfer, capacity building and finance to support action in developing countries. **Co-Chair Minister Groser** welcomed clear expressions of the structure of the 2015 agreement by participants.

Proposals for contribution types that could accommodate various capabilities included legally binding commitments, absolute and relative voluntary targets, actions and policies and measures. The targets could be not only for mitigation, but also for adaptation and the provision of support. In order to ensure comparability, the use of CO₂-equivalents was recommended as a common metric.

A consistent theme of the discussion was the need for a hybrid and transparent pledge-and-review model with top-down common rules for MRV, compliance and accounting and provisions for dynamic bottom-up contributions in accordance with national circumstances. It was noted that the new regime should include a mechanism to increase targets, which should be easier than it is currently under the Kyoto Protocol.

There was a common understanding that the new agreement should build upon existing institutional arrangements and infrastructure and should provide market and non-market-based incentives for private and public sector engagement at all levels, including cities, regional and sub-national initiatives.

More specifically, various Parties suggested areas that the 2015 agreement should address. Suggestions included deforestation, response measures, agriculture and loss and damage as part of the efforts to ensure low carbon and resilient future, equity, survival of all countries, poverty eradication and quality of life for future generations.

Pre-2020 increase of ambition

Enhanced pre-2020 action to close the mitigation gap and delivery of means of implementation were broadly considered a key to a successful 2015-agreement. It was suggested that the emissions should peak in 2015 or in 2020 at the latest. Across the board, Parties agreed on the need to take urgent action. Some participants warned that insufficient action before 2020 would lead to considerably higher costs for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage and that commitment from all countries to take bolder steps until 2015 are needed. Many Parties emphasized the need to implement existing commitments, in particular those under the Kyoto Protocol, to increase mitigation ambition by 2020. In response to this call, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the European Union and Japan provided information on the status of ratification and on defining their current and future ambitions.

Some participants emphasized that increase of ambition could create opportunities, such as cooperative action to champion initiatives with high mitigation potential that are replicable and inspiring for others to follow. Climate leaders were called to identify areas with high mitigation potential without delay and scale them up. Small island states were given as an example for a natural champion in the field of renewable energy, which would also have economic co-benefits. The South Pacific forum in 2014 would provide a platform to undertake partnerships with small island states in this field. Colombia, Norway and UK proposed to champion REDD-plus. Portugal offered to champion energy-efficiency and Switzerland invited proposals for cooperation to champion clean production.

The discussions identified also other specific initiatives that can help to close the ambition gap such as phase down of HFCs and fossil fuel energy, ban of fossil fuel subsidies, investment in green buildings, ocean thermal energy conversion and carbon negative clean hydrogen fuels. In order to catalyse action, countries were encouraged to identify barriers for the dissemination of promising technologies and share strategies on how to overcome them. Proposals on how the UNFCCC process could help to enhance action highlighted the international mechanism for loss and damage, developing rules for market mechanisms, LULUCF and implementation of National Adaptation Plans.

Many participants emphasized that effective redistribution and greater predictability of support is needed and proposed a roadmap on the delivery of the long-term finance goal of USD 100 billion by 2020. A number of participants called for further elaboration of the role of private finance and carbon markets.

Expectations for an outcome of Warsaw —the roadmap to Paris

Regarding the process under the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, the views converged on the importance of having a successful outcome in Warsaw on the way to Lima and on the need to set clear milestones to deliver an agreement in Paris. It was suggested that already in 2014 Parties should start real action on the ground.

Many would like to invite countries to start domestic preparations for the 2015-agreement and communicate their envisaged efforts as soon as possible in a comprehensive and transparent manner. It was also proposed to assess all pledges before Paris to check whether the combined efforts are on track with science, and to work in parallel under the UNFCCC on the definition of common rules for accountability and MRV.

Closure of the high level dialogue

Co-Chair Minister Groser stated that nothing in the discussion made him think that views expressed are incompatible, and that he remains convinced that there are no differences in the discussion that could not be reconciled as the negotiation matures. On a similar note, **Co-Chair Minister Balakrishnan** stated that there has been far more agreement than disagreement in the discussion, and encouraged participants to approach each issue constructively.