

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Bonn Climate Change Conference, 14-25 May

UNFCCC met in Bonn, Germany from 14 May to 25 May 2012. It was marked by the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ACP), a negotiation body established in December 2011 at COP17 (Durban, December 2011) to develop a new legal instrument (“a new protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force”) under the Convention, which is to be applicable to all Parties and to enter into force by 2020. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), the Ad Hoc Working Group for Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) also met in Bonn.

The next negotiation session of UNFCCC, funds permitting, has tentatively been scheduled to take place from 30 August-5 September in Bangkok. This would be the last negotiation session before COP18, which is to be held in Doha from 26 November-7 December 2012.

Key decisions adopted at COP 17 in addition to the establishment of ADP, included agreement on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol (KP2), which will begin in 2013, and extension of the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP until COP18. The Bonn session was therefore marked by two intertwined questions - how to end the AWG-LCA and how to start the ADP. These debates were closely tied to the adoption of the ADP agenda, which took two weeks of difficult negotiations. The agenda eventually adopted on the last day of the conference includes two work streams: (a) negotiating the new legal instrument to be effective by 2020 and (b) enhancing mitigation ambition (including both pre- and post-2020 mitigation ambition). The focus of AWG-KP was on issues that need to be finalized before the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol can begin, including matters related to quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives (QELROs) which could be adopted as amendments to Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol, and carry-over of assigned amount units (AAUs). Discussions advanced work toward consensus of these issues, but several issues remain, including the length of the second commitment period and carry-over of surplus AAUs.

REDD+

Parties discussed a range of REDD+ issues in Bonn. Parties decided early in the Bonn session to prioritize work on National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) as well as on drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. The technical discussions on NFMS and MRV produced a lot of substantive text, albeit with many brackets, which is to be forwarded as draft negotiation text to SBSTA for continued discussions in Doha. A major point of discussion regarding drivers of deforestation and forest degradation was the scale at which drivers should be addressed - international versus national. It was agreed this issue would be taken up again in Doha, with a view to adopt a decision at COP 19.

There was limited time to discuss safeguards information systems (SIS) and reference emission levels/reference levels (RELS/RLs). Discussion of the need for further guidance on SIS as well as the timing and frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how the Cancun safeguards are being addressed and respected has been deferred to Doha, as has the development of guidance on the technical assessment of proposed RELS/RLs.

Modalities and procedures for financing results-based REDD+ actions were also discussed. Almost all Parties agree that private finance will be needed in addition to public finance to achieve significant REDD+ results, and therefore there is a role for both market and non-market sources of finance. A number of Parties stated the need for both a dedicated REDD+ window under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as well as a new market mechanism. Several developing countries raised concerns over a funding gap Phases I and II of REDD+, once fast-start finance runs out at the end of the year. Some Parties called for equitable and proportionate access to financing across all of the five REDD+ options. A verbal report of the key points of the discussion was made to the Chair of the AWG-LCA, which is to be reflected in the report of the session. Nevertheless, as agreed in Durban, a technical paper on modalities and procedures for financing results-based REDD+ actions is being prepared by the UNFCCC Secretariat, and a workshop is being planned, to take place either in Bangkok or Doha. Parties further agreed to continue discussing this issue after COP18, despite the ending of the AWG-LCA track of negotiations, thereby transferring the discussion to another body of the Convention (SBI).

Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)

In Durban, Parties agreed to initiate four work programmes related to LULUCF issues under the Kyoto Protocol: (1) exploration of a more comprehensive approach to LULUCF accounting for Annex I countries under the Kyoto Protocol; (2) recommendations for possible additional LULUCF activities under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM); (3) consideration of alternative approaches to addressing the risk of non-permanence under CDM and (4) consideration of modalities and procedures for additionality. In Bonn, Parties agreed to a prioritization and staggered timing to address these four areas of work, with CFM issues of new activities and approaches to addressing non-permanence viewed as the most urgent. It was agreed that submissions would be invited on both the CDM issues as well as comprehensive accounting in autumn 2012.

Even though these LULUCF issues are part of the Kyoto Protocol, they have potential implications for REDD+, particularly in regards to reconciliation of accounting that would likely be required in those REDD+ countries with CDM projects.

Adaptation

There was limited negotiation time in AWG-LCA for adaptation issues. Parties however made progress on arrangements to support the formulation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). The discussion focused on support for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and resulted in draft text, heavily bracketed, to be considered in Doha.

The draft text includes the facilitation of country-driven NAPs, streamlining the LDC Fund to support the NAP process and sharing of best practices in adaptation. Several LDCs highlighted the need for strengthening capacity to integrate adaptation into national development policies. Some Parties pushed for the LDC Fund to start supporting the NAP process by COP18. The conclusions of the Chair urge developed countries to mobilize financial support for the NAP process and sets the ambition on adopting a decision in Doha.

Mitigation

Parties discussed mitigation by developed and developing countries during two dedicated in-session workshops. It was agreed that this work would continue through workshops focusing specifically on the clarification of targets for developed countries and specific NAMAs for developing countries. Parties also started considering the development of general guidelines for MRV for NAMAs by developing countries and agreed to continue doing so with a view to agreeing on the next steps in Doha.

Agriculture

Following the Durban decision initiating an exchange of views on agriculture, Parties in Bonn engaged in a debate on the scope of the work. The position of the G77 and China was that this work should focus exclusively on building the adaptation capacity of the agricultural sectors. Several developed countries, supported the initiation of a technical work programme on agriculture that would address both adaptation and mitigation. This broader scope was not acceptable to most developing countries. Parties agreed to continue their consideration of agriculture in Doha.