



UNFCCC COP-8 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2002

Parties to COP-8 heard statements by UN agencies and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations in a morning session. The high-level segment was inaugurated by a "lighting of the lamp" ceremony by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India. The first of three Ministerial Round Tables was held in the afternoon focusing on "Taking Stock." Delegates also continued deliberations on non-Annex I issues in a contact group that met throughout the day.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

COP-8 President Baalu opened the high-level segment.

STATEMENTS FROM HEADS OF UNITED NATIONS

AGENCIES: The World Meteorological Organization Secretary General G. O. P. Obasi called on Parties to continue supporting the systematic observation of the atmosphere and other activities to reduce scientific uncertainties. UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer noted that those in poverty will suffer most from the adverse effects of climate change. He called for concrete action on adaptation as well as mitigation.

STATEMENTS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL

ORGANIZATIONS: IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri encouraged Parties to make maximum use of the IPCC Third Assessment Report (TAR) in their deliberations, and noted that the Fourth Assessment Report would focus more on the costs and benefits of mitigation options and hopefully include regional analyses. He also said that the IPCC would be intensifying its outreach programme. GEF Assistant CEO Kenneth King remarked on the third replenishment, which will allow the GEF to increase funding for climate change related activities, and noted that the GEF will make initial disbursements under the UNFCCC LDC Fund in the coming weeks. World Bank Environment Department Director Kristalina Georgieva said that the Bank is committed to supporting carbon finance. She noted growth in renewable energy investments, which presently account for 64% of the Bank's energy lending portfolio.

OPEC General Secretary Alvaro Calderón remarked that renewable technologies are in their infancy and that technological advances are making oil and gas "cleaner fuels." He also reminded delegates of the need to minimize the adverse effects of policies and measures to address climate change and said that adequate provision should be made for the transfer of technology to developing countries. Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization Secretary General Wafik Kamil stressed that the principle of common but differentiated responsibility should remain as the basis for the UNFCCC process. Highlighting various projects, Asian Development Bank Deputy Director General Rolf Zeliuss said that the Bank has provided assistance to developing countries for least-cost adaptation and capacity-building.

STATEMENTS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL

ORGANIZATIONS: Nasimul Haque, for the CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK, called for substantial financial transfers from developed countries to developing countries to support adaptation, and for measures to keep temperature change well below 2 degrees Celsius, while ensuring development. He also demanded the immediate ratification of the Protocol by Australia, Canada, Russia, and the US. William Kyte, on behalf of BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY NGOs, remarked on the role that business must play in alleviating poverty through sustainable development. He called for clear rules and procedures, particularly relating to the CDM.

PRESENTATION OF A CHILDREN'S CHARTER TO

THE PRESIDENT: Two youth delegates presented a Children's Charter to COP-8 President Baalu. The Charter notes several concerns of India's youth, including the increase of greenhouse gas concentrations, the rise in sea levels, and the threat climate change poses to flora and fauna. It calls for remedial action including increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy and public transport.

INAUGURATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT:

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India inaugurated the high-level segment with the "lighting of the lamp" ceremony. COP-8 President Baalu said India is committed to addressing climate change and sustainable development. He noted the participation of over 4000 delegates from 169 countries at COP-8. He also expressed hope that the Delhi Declaration would become a historic milestone in the UNFCCC process.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Joke Waller-Hunter noted achievements since COP-7, including the WSSD outcomes. Pointing to extreme weather events experienced globally in recent months, she highlighted the key role of tackling poverty and climate change. Emphasizing the importance of implementation, she supported practical approaches, including: action on adaptation and vulnerability; the development of national communications; and use of the CDM.

UN Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs Nitin Desai delivered a message on behalf of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. He said that one challenge for the COP was to consider to what extent the approaches, goals and methods agreed at WSSD can be a basis for cooperation in this forum. In conclusion, he called for a greater sense of shared global responsibility.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India described India's commitment to combating global climate change, remarking on its renewable energy sector and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. He highlighted the importance of adaptation, vulnerability, and capacity-building for developing countries, and said that consideration of developing country commitments would be premature due to, among other things, inequitable per-capita emissions rights, and differences in per-capita income between developing and developed countries.

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ROUND TABLE

COP President Baalu welcomed delegates to the first Ministerial Round Table under the theme "Taking Stock," co-chaired by Minister Margaret Beckett (UK). Co-Chair Beckett said the session would set the stage for later round tables. While noting the comprehensive climate change mitigation framework already achieved, she said there is no room for complacency.

Many delegates highlighted their domestic circumstances, actions and experiences. TONGA, for AOSIS, noted that small island developing states are among those hardest hit by climate change. NIUE said its vulnerability is related to capacity limitations. PANAMA noted that his country's biodiversity is being effected by climate change, while BHUTAN underscored the vulnerability of its fragile mountain ecosystem. FINLAND stressed the EU's efforts to achieve tangible results and show demonstrable progress by 2005.

On meeting the UNFCCC's ultimate objective of stabilizing greenhouse gases at a level preventing dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, NEW ZEALAND said progress was not nearly enough. The EU called for a common dialogue, including identifying a level of non-dangerous emissions concentrations. AOSIS stressed an immediate reduction in emissions of 50-80%. The CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK urged the COP to begin discussions on establishing limits to prevent dangerous climate change. IRELAND proposed discussion on a fair and equitable distribution of emission targets.

On future action, NEW ZEALAND called for a broad approach across countries. AOSIS and JAPAN said all countries will need to be involved in mitigation. Recognising that countries will carry different burdens with regard to mitigation, SWITZERLAND stressed cooperation and partnerships. NORWAY called for an ambitious and long-term global climate change regime and stressed the need for a political response to the IPCC TAR. POLAND said adaptation and funding for climate change must go hand-in-hand with mitigation and long-term strategies.

AOSIS, MEXICO, and UGANDA noted that Annex I countries are not fulfilling commitments and emissions are on the rise. Considering this, MALAYSIA questioned how some Annex I countries can propose developing country emission reduction commitments. THAILAND, VENEZUELA, TANZANIA and SAUDI ARABIA opposed discussion of reduction commitments for developing countries. The EU underscored the need for dialogue on the matter.

AOSIS, PANAMA and SAMOA called for strengthening adaptation. UGANDA, IRAN and MALAYSIA urged further efforts with regard to transfer of technology, financial resources and capacity-building. NEPAL underscored the importance of capacity-building and further research to mitigate the effects of climate change. BRAZIL urged concrete measures and adequate technologies.

ETHIOPIA said economic development is crucial for adapting to climate change, and urged increased financial support. MEXICO called for resources for adaptation.

IRAN stressed minimizing losses due to adverse effects and impacts of response measures on developing countries with economies dependent on fossil fuels. SAUDI ARABIA expressed concern regarding the limited progress on UNFCCC Article 4.8 and 4.9 (adverse effects).

FINLAND and DENMARK pledged support to the LDC Fund. KENYA and UGANDA appealed for a special fund for developing countries other than LDCs.

On the CDM, COLOMBIA supported sequestration projects. MEXICO said the complex rules are difficult to apply, and the INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES supported simplified procedures. URUGUAY said the lack of institutional and legal capacity was a barrier to CDM implementation.

On ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA announced its ratification. NEW ZEALAND said his country will "almost certainly" ratify the Protocol next month. JAPAN, BULGARIA, ETHIOPIA, KENYA, the EU and BRAZIL urged countries to ratify the Protocol. CHINA said developed countries are "duty bound" to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and expressed disappointment that the Protocol has not yet entered into force.

On the Delhi Declaration, JAPAN supported including the need to address reductions beyond the first commitment period. UGANDA said the Declaration should call for the ratification of the Protocol. SWITZERLAND supported reference to a forward-looking approach to address the UNFCCC's ultimate objective. AUSTRALIA said it should put into place a process for future global emission reduction arrangements. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported a Declaration that would consider the human dimension to climate change.

Co-Chair Beckett summarized the session's key themes and closed the session.

CONTACT GROUP

NON-ANNEX I ISSUES: The contact group, chaired by José Romero (Switzerland), met throughout the day. Parties worked through the text on the improved guidelines for non-Annex I national communications, removing several brackets. The discussion focused on how best to structure individual paragraphs so that they accurately reflect agreed ideas. In several instances, delegates raised the issue of when to use "should" rather than "are encouraged to." In the afternoon session, Parties returned to the beginning of the text in an effort to remove remaining brackets. Parties could not agree on whether the guidelines should refer to specific paragraphs of UNFCCC Articles 4 (commitments) and 12 (communication of information), the Articles in their entirety, or have no reference to specific articles.

Views on the use of elements from the guidelines for Annex I national communications varied, and no agreement was reached on inventory years, or whether Parties "should" or "shall" use the IPCC Revised 1996 Guidelines for the preparation of inventories. Delegates again addressed, and failed to agree, whether to have "develop and use" or just "use" country-specific and regional emissions factors. They then discussed, among other options, whether to have "provide information on" or "consider identifying" key source categories as described in the IPCC Good Practice Guidance, and failed to agree. Discussions continued late into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates were nowhere to be seen late Wednesday night with the arrival of the Ministers and protracted discussions on guidelines for non-Annex I communications taking place. Some participants noted slow but steady progress, while others shuddered at the possibility of this issue taking the COP into an additional day of negotiations. On a related issue, a number of observers were quick to note an interesting shift on the issue of future developing country commitments with some Ministers addressing the issue with a frankness not displayed by all negotiators a week ago.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLES: Parties will convene at 10:00 am in the Main Plenary Hall to hold the second round table discussion on "Climate Change and Sustainable Development." The final round table discussion entitled "Wrap Up" will be held at 3:00 pm.

SBI: The SBI will convene upon completion of the final round table in the Main Plenary Hall.

NON-ANNEX I ISSUES: This contact group will meet at 10:00 in Hall 3.