



SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

*Twenty-Second SPREP Meeting*Apia, Samoa
13 – 15 September 2011**Agenda Item 8.2.7:****UNFCCC COP17 in Durban****Purpose**

1. To inform the Meeting on recent developments relating to the UNFCCC negotiations and to update the Meeting on the Secretariat's initiatives to support Pacific Island Countries in preparation for and at the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) in Durban.

Background

2. The negotiations under the UNFCCC have gone through two rounds since the completion of the 16th COP in Cancun. At a meeting in Bangkok, Parties spent a whole week in disagreements over the agenda for the meeting, effectively stalling progress on official matters. However, a large number of informal discussions took place that did assist in improving understanding of positions. A pre-session AOSIS meeting also assisted the group in being very well prepared for the April and June meetings.
3. The meeting that took place in June in Bonn was also hampered by disagreements over the agenda. Again the key issue was whether matters that were unresolved in Cancun would be solved in Durban. In addition, many Parties sought to introduce new items that did not have consensus.
4. Some of the key areas of concern for Pacific Island Countries are:
 - I. Mitigation:
 - The COP to adopt a global goal for emissions reductions (COP 17): 95% by 2050.
 - The COP adopts a peak year, for global emissions (2015).
 - II. Adaptation:
 - Use 2011 to build support for the work programme on loss and damage (noting that the final decision will be taken at COP 18)
 - III. Legal options:
 - The COP adopts a legally binding agreement in Durban (2 track) (or adopts a decision agreeing that there will be one at COP 18)
 - IV. Finance:
 - COP to adopt recommendations on the design of the Green Climate Fund, and adopt this as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention

Current state of negotiations

5. The first week of the Bonn meeting centred on the agendas of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA). The provisional agendas of both bodies included new items based on parties' proposals and Decision 1/CP.16 (outcome of the AWG-LCA's work). Many of the proposals proved controversial and parties spent the first three days discussing the agendas and organization of work. They eventually agreed to launch work on some agenda items while holding most of the proposed new agenda items in abeyance, pending further consultations. In the end, the SBSTA's closing plenary agreed to consider, at its next session, the proposed new item on impacts of climate change on water and integrated water resources management under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation. No agreement was reached on other proposed new items, such as blue carbon and rights of nature and the integrity of ecosystems, and a work programme on agriculture. But progress was made in the setting up of a Standing Committee on finance (that is expected to oversee and track climate funds for developing countries), a technology transfer mechanism, and an adaptation committee to help developing countries cope with the effects of climate change.

6. Under the SBI, work was launched on new items on national adaptation plans, and loss and damage, the consideration of which was mandated by the Cancun Agreements. Proposed new agenda items relating to measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) remained in abeyance, but related work was undertaken under the AWG-LCA. Proposed new items related to the impacts of the implementation of response measures also featured prominently in the agenda discussions. As a result, the SBI and SBSTA Chairs convened a forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures organized as a contact group.

7. The focus of the AWG-KP was on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, after the first commitment period expires at the end of 2012. Parties concentrated on outstanding political issues and conditions set by various Annex I countries for taking on new commitments during a second commitment period. Despite initial opposition from developing countries, parties also undertook technical work on issues, including land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF), the flexibility mechanisms and methodological issues. Progress made was reported by the AWG-KP Chair, which Parties also agreed to discuss at the next session, hence the agreement to suspend AWG-KP 16 and resume it during a new meeting to be scheduled in September/October. The possible venues are Bangkok (which is the only available UN conference facility during that period), and Panama which has offered to host (but may have difficulties securing the necessary funding).

8. Despite good discussions on these issues, however, both the climate situation and the prospects for the global climate regime have become of greater concern to Pacific Island Countries. Global emissions from the energy sector went up a record 5% last year, according to the International Energy Agency, representing a worrying scenario if this trend continues.

9. The Bonn meetings discussions on the future of the Kyoto Protocol (KP), the legally binding regime that commits developed countries to cut their emissions by certain percentages, remained contentious. All developed countries except the United States are KP Parties and are obliged to commit to a second period of emissions reductions after the first period ends in December 2012. For a smooth transition, the figures for emission cuts for the second period have to be agreed to by this December at the UN climate conference in Durban. But three countries (Japan, Russia, Canada) have announced they will not commit to emissions cuts under the KP in a second period.

10. The European Union countries, traditionally strong supporters of the KP, have yet to declare conclusively whether they will sign up. If they do, others in Annex 1 may also do so. But if there are no significant pledges, then there is a danger that the KP will not have a second commitment period, which forms the basis for all the other mechanisms within the KP. In its place will probably be an inferior system of voluntary pledges by both developed and some developing countries. The outlines of such a system were already discussed at Cancun. The inadequacy of a voluntary system was highlighted by Pacific Island Countries back in 1994, through the introduction by Vanuatu and Nauru of the AOSIS Protocol proposal, which led to the development of the KP. It could also be argued that the paucity of the current pledges made also demonstrates the shortfalls of a voluntary agreement.

11. Instead of cutting their emissions by at least 25-40% below 1990 levels in 2020 as science require (or by more than 40%, as demanded by developing countries), the developed countries will actually increase their emissions by 6% in one scenario (based on the lower end of pledges and the use of loopholes) or will only cut by 16% in another scenario (based on the upper end of pledges and without the use of loopholes). These estimates were made in a report of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) last December.

12. These pledges, together with targets announced by some developing countries, indicate that the world is moving towards a global temperature increase of between 2.5 to 5 degrees Celsius before the end of this century, according to the report. This is far removed from the 1.5 degree called for by Pacific Island Countries or the 2 degree called for by most other countries.

Next steps

13. Pacific Island Countries will require support from SPREP in order to continue to prepare for the negotiations. To this end, SPREP was requested to facilitate negotiations skills training and preparatory meetings prior to COP17. Given the additional negotiating session, which had been expected but could not be planned for appropriately, it may be necessary to conduct some negotiations training in late August, combined with a preparatory session in Durban prior to the COP. This is in line with recommendations of the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable.

Recommendations

14. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the developments outlined concerning climate change negotiations;
- **direct** the Secretariat to undertake any related tasks or provide assistance to Members in matters relating to emerging climate change negotiations issues; and
- **support the UNFCCC negotiations** at COP 17 in Durban and the preparatory meetings.