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Global Climate

*Originally published in:
Yearbook of International Environmental
Law, vol. 24.2013 (2014), pp. 226-238
DOI: 10.1093/yiel/yvu008*

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(1) Introduction

In what has become normal procedure at the international climate negotiations, the 2013 United Nations climate conference in Warsaw (the nineteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 19) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the ninth Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 9)) once again seemed on the brink of collapse and concluded more than one day behind schedule, in the evening of Saturday 23 November 2013. However, on most of the key issues it made only scant progress.

This report lays out the main developments in Warsaw and assesses the main outcomes. It starts with the discussions under the Durban Platform on developing a new comprehensive climate agreement by 2015 and increasing short-term ambition and subsequently covers the issues relating to near-term implementation of previous decisions in the areas of emission reductions and transparency, adaptation, loss and damage, finance and technology.

(2) ADP Workstream 1 - Negotiating a New Climate Agreement

After the failure of the 2009 Copenhagen conference, countries decided at the 2011 conference in Durban to make a new attempt to develop a comprehensive climate agreement. The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) aims to develop a new agreement “applicable to all”, which is to be adopted in 2015 and to be implemented from 2020. The task for the Warsaw conference was to develop a roadmap for the next two years of negotiations, including questions regarding the legal form of countries’ participation in the new agreement and the process on how to determine the substantive content of countries’ participation..

The traditional industrialised countries (listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC) have been keen to break down the so-called “firewall”, the clear distinction between Annex I and non-Annex I countries (the traditional “developing countries”) that is laid down in the Convention of 1992. By contrast, in particular the “group of like-minded developing countries (LMDCs)”, which includes China and India, some other Asian countries such as Pakistan and the Philippines, OPEC countries such as Saudi Arabia as well as the left-leaning Latin American countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela, have so far strongly resisted any explicit or implicit dissolution of the traditional distinction between the Annexes. In Warsaw, they strongly defended the view that only Annex I countries should adopt legally binding commitments, while also in future only “enhanced actions” should be demanded from non-Annex I countries.

The LMDCs also strongly objected to any notion that the actions of non-Annex I countries should be in any way assessed internationally. Annex I countries as well as many non-Annex I countries were in favour of setting an early deadline and content requirements for the international submission of initial offers in order to provide sufficient time to countries to assess and negotiate each other’s offers. Many Annex I and non-Annex I countries also supported the establishment of an international process to assess whether countries’ initial

offers actually represented their fair shares and would add up to level of ambition needed to meet the 2°C target. However, the LMDCs maintained that any such process of assessing offers should only apply to Annex I countries but not to non-Annex I countries.

The final agreement (Decision 1/CP.19, Further advancing the Durban Platform, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1) invites countries “to initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their intended nationally determined contributions, without prejudice to the legal nature of the contributions”. These “intended contributions” are supposed to be communicated “well in advance” of the 2015 COP, “by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so”, and “in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the intended contributions”. The ADP is to identify the information that countries will provide accompanying their intended contributions, but only by the next COP in Lima, which takes place in December 2014.

(3) ADP Workstream 2 - Enhancing Short-Term Ambition

Alongside the new climate agreement to be adopted in 2015, the ADP’s Workstream 2 discusses measures to increase the short-term ambition of mitigation measures as their current level is far below what would be necessary to achieve the 2°C target. It was also part of a balanced agreement: Workstream 2 has been considered by most developing countries as an essential stepping stone for the development of a new climate regime under Workstream 1. In their view, raising the level of ambition for pre-2020 under Workstream 2 has to be done within the existing Annex structure of the UNFCCC with all its implications: Annex I countries are required to lead and to support any mitigation action by Non-Annex I parties with finance, technology and capacity building, often referred to as “means of implementation”. Under this premise, Japan’s announcement to drastically reduce the ambition of its 2020 commitment from -25% to +3.1% as compared to 1990 levels, had a devastating effect on the negotiation dynamics.

Developed countries and some developing countries including AOSIS proposed to close the mitigation gap through collaborative work outside the convention. AOSIS proposed to establish a “Warsaw Workplan” to identify and evaluate different technological and policy options to abate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The United States and the EU reiterated their previous proposals to develop so-called ‘international cooperative initiatives’, such as increased deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies, reduction of emissions from international aviation and shipping, and regulation of fluorinated hydrocarbons (HFCs) under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Nonetheless, the only cooperative initiative that moved forward in Warsaw was the promotion of mitigation (and adaptation) activities by cities and other subnational authorities. During the Warsaw talks an in-session workshop was held on urbanisation and the role of sub-national governments in facilitating climate action in cities. The workshop was well regarded and consequently the ADP agreed to convene a forum on the occasion of the next meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies to the Conventions (SBs) in June 2014 to further develop discussions (Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action on the third part of its second session, held in Warsaw from 12 to 23 November 2013, FCCC/ADP/2013/3).

Other more concrete mitigation work programmes did not go forward. The lowest common denominator that parties agreed to is to continue the discussion on how to increase the level of ambition for pre-2020 mitigation at a ministerial meeting at the upcoming session of the Subsidiary Bodies in June 2014. A ministerial meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto

Protocol had already been scheduled before and will now be amended to include high-level representatives of countries that are not a party to the Kyoto Protocol (Decision 1/CP.19, Further advancing the Durban Platform, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

(4) Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

As more and more key industrialised countries are dropping out of the Kyoto Protocol it becomes increasingly important that MRV rules under the UNFCCC are environmentally sound and stringent.

In Warsaw, the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual GHG inventories of Annex I Parties were revised. Major revisions concern common reporting format (CRF) tables and global warming potential values, which have to be used from 2015 on. Also, the new IPCC methods on wetlands were included, which provide the basis to voluntarily report on wetlands in a transparent and common format (Decision 24/CP.19, Revision of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual inventories for Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.3).

As the guidelines for GHG inventories were revised, it also became necessary to subsequently revise the guidelines for the review process. From an MRV perspective it was important to come to an agreement and establish guidelines to be used for the review of the first biennial reports, which were introduced as part of the Cancún Agreements in 2010 and are to start being submitted in 2014. In Warsaw, Parties adopted guidelines for the technical review of information reported in GHG inventories, biennial reports and national communications by Annex I countries (Decision 23/CP.19, Work programme on the revision of the guidelines for the review of biennial reports and national communications, including national inventory reviews, for developed country Parties, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2).

As for non-Annex I countries, the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) process to analyse the reports submitted by non-Annex I Parties is another one of the innovations established by the Cancún Agreements. So far non-Annex I reporting had not been subject to international assessment. With the decisions taken in Warsaw, the ICA process is finally operational. The controversy on the composition of the teams of technical experts (TTE) that will analyse the reports could be resolved: Each TTE shall be led by two chairs: one from an Annex I and another from a non-Annex I Party. The overall composition of the TTEs shall be such that the majority of experts come from non-Annex I Parties (Decision 20/CP.19, Composition, modalities and procedures of the team of technical experts under international consultation and analysis, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2).

Furthermore, the terms of reference for the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) on National Communications from non-Annex I, which supports non-Annex I countries in producing their National Communications, were revised, mainly to include the biennial update reports introduced by the Cancún Agreements, and it was decided that the work of the CGE is to be continued for five years (2014-2018) (Decision 19/CP.19, Work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2).

(5) Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)

In Warsaw, both formal decisions on NAMAs by developing countries as well as other information provided in the negotiations and COP side events confirmed a growing consensus that NAMAs are to be developed and defined via a bottom-up process – and not via strict

UNFCCC decisions. Based on the three cornerstones of NAMAs (contribution to mitigation, in the context of sustainable development, and being measurable, reportable and verifiable) a concept emerges of what constitutes a NAMA in both informal and UNFCCC driven processes. However, so far no criterion exists which would prohibit a country from calling any mitigation action a NAMA if it wishes to do so. This is in line with the voluntary nature of NAMAs and the general intention to raise mitigation ambition through a deliberately wide range of nationally appropriate actions.

This voluntary nature becomes more and more visible in the design of the UNFCCC NAMA registry, where a new and now web-based prototype was launched by the UNFCCC secretariat prior to the COP (<<http://www4.unfccc.int/sites/nama/SitePages/Home.aspx>>). It is not the intention of the registry to serve as an MRV tool, but

- to give guidance and support in the NAMA development process, especially for those NAMAs which seek international funding,
- to provide information on NAMAs in preparation as well as those already being implemented – contributing to a better picture on the diversity of NAMAs,
- to provide a platform for developing countries to demonstrate their mitigation activities.

Concerning MRV of NAMAs there is a broad acknowledgement that good MRV supports effective climate policy and especially Annex I countries were interested to maximise the provision of information. However, the agreement reached in the guidelines for domestic MRV of domestically supported NAMAs (that is, NAMAs not supported by industrialised countries) (Decision 21/CP.19, General guidelines for domestic measurement, reporting and verification of domestically supported nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing country Parties, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2) confirm the view that MRV of domestic NAMAs is fully at the discretion of the respective countries. Despite the interest of Annex I countries to maximise the provision of information the general principle of the guidelines is that they are “voluntary, pragmatic, non-prescriptive, non-intrusive and country driven”. Parties are invited to use the guidelines on a voluntary basis. Factually the guidance given on how to set up MRV systems for domestically supported NAMAs are minimal in content.

(6) Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)

After eight years of intense discussions, in Warsaw Parties were able to finalise a package of decisions on a programme for the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of forests, resulting in the so-called “Warsaw Framework for REDD+ Action”. Deforestation and forest degradation account for about 1/5 of global CO₂ emissions but had historically not been tackled within the UNFCCC.

Parties were not only able to reach agreement on the question of financing but it was also possible to agree on a number of methodological issues. With these decisions, seven in total, the conditions under which developing countries can access results-based payments for emission reductions achieved in the forestry sector have been established.

The discussions had already made considerable progress at the session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) held in Bonn in June 2013, where Parties agreed on three draft decisions that were subsequently adopted by the COP in Warsaw (Decisions 11/CP.19, Modalities for national forest monitoring systems; 12/CP.19, The timing and the frequency of presentations of the summary of information on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16, appendix I, are being addressed and respected; and 15/CP.19, Addressing the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

In Warsaw, Parties agreed on procedures for assessing the data and information provided by developing countries (Decision 14/CP.19, Modalities for measuring, reporting and verifying, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1). Similarly, Parties agreed on a process for the technical assessment of reference (emissions) levels submitted by REDD+ countries (Decision 13/CP.19, Guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1). On finance, Parties inter alia decided that developing countries should provide the most recent summary of information on how minimum ecological and social standards (safeguards) have been respected and addressed before they can access results-based payments for forest mitigation activities; a requirement several non governmental organisations and indigenous peoples groups had been calling for. With regard to the disbursement of results-based finance, the Green Climate Fund has been assigned a “key role” (Decision 9/CP.19, Work programme on results-based finance to progress the full implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

In the negotiations on institutional arrangements and the coordination of support for REDD+ activities, the question on whether a REDD+ specific institution should be installed proved a key issue of divergence. The installation of a REDD+ specific institution responsible for the coordination and supervision of REDD+ measures (REDD+ committee), for which the Coalition for Rainforest Nations had vehemently advocated, did not meet with the approval from other Parties. Instead, Parties agreed to designate national entities at the national level that are to serve for the coordination of support of REDD+ and communicate with the relevant bodies of the Convention. These entities are encouraged to meet on an annual basis (Decision 10/CP.19, Coordination of support for the implementation of activities in relation to mitigation actions in the forest sector by developing countries, including institutional arrangements, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

(7) Market Mechanisms

Parties have been discussing options for scaling up existing and/or introducing new market mechanisms for many years. Views on this matter differ greatly, with the EU promoting the top-down “new market mechanism” (NMM) as defined by the Durban conference, while Japan, the US and other industrialised countries are in favour of a bottom-up “framework for various approaches” (FVA) that should accommodate national offsetting schemes like the Japanese Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), with nationally defined (and potentially less stringent) accounting rules. Last but not least, a couple of Latin American countries oppose market mechanisms in general. They have introduced the notion of non market-based approaches (NMA) into the negotiations.

The negotiations at Warsaw were characterised by the same antagonism between fulfilling the Doha mandate and a complete rejection of market-based mitigation measures. Consequently, the negotiation text that was debated shortly before the consideration of this agenda item was closed comprised two options: on the one hand, putting a moratorium on the new market mechanism, on the other an enumeration of elements that the NMM modalities and procedures should include. This gap proved too wide to bridge, and the negotiations broke down. The NMM negotiations will be taken up again by the next meeting of the SBSTA in June 2014.

In the FVA negotiations, agreement on the basics of the FVA such as common accounting rules and an adequate level of transparency proved difficult. Therefore, the talks focussed on launching a platform for information exchange, the least comprehensive of three

options tabled at the afore-mentioned workshop, as a first step. An early text proposal mentioned aspects to be included in the platform, such as methodologies to determine baselines and targets, rules and procedures to ensure environmental integrity, arrangements to avoid double counting, and MRV issues. The platform was also to incorporate non-market-based approaches. Yet, as in the NMM talks, the negotiators were unable to reach consensus. The talks will be continued in June next year. The idea of the information sharing platform later appeared in text suggested for the ADP decision, yet this language did not make it into the final decision.

(8) Loss and Damage

As during last year's climate negotiations in Doha, this year's conference in Warsaw was overshadowed by announcements of extreme weather events. The devastation caused by super typhoon Hiyan in the Philippines exemplified where the limits of adaptation measures lie and pushed the discussion on how to deal with climate-induced losses and damages to the centre stage of the negotiations.

In Warsaw, developing countries arrived with the clear goal to establish an international mechanism for addressing loss and damage under the UNFCCC. Their proposal again called for compensation, a concept which already at last year's conference in Doha had evoked the fierce opposition of developed countries due to concerns regarding financial liability for loss and damage in developing countries. Accordingly, developed countries were also unwilling to discuss the issue in Warsaw. Despite these continuing fundamental differences, Parties managed to concentrate the discussions on the overall purpose of the mechanism, its organisational structure and functions. The main point of discussions in the final hours of the negotiations was the question on where the mechanism should be established. The G77/China wanted the mechanism to be established under the COP to reflect the fact that the issue goes beyond adaptation and is recognized as the third pillar of the UNFCCC next to mitigation and adaptation. Several developed countries generally preferred an institutional solution under the Cancún Adaptation Framework, with the US being particularly concerned about the financial and legal implications of establishing loss and damage as a third pillar.

After very intense negotiations Parties finally agreed to install the "Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts". The decision outlines three broad working areas, each containing a list of functions the mechanism is to fulfil: Enhancement of knowledge and understanding of risk management approaches to address loss and damage, strengthening interaction among relevant stakeholders, and the enhancement of action and support (Decision 2/CP.19, Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

Contrary to what developing countries had originally asked for, this international mechanism will, however, not be set up under the COP but be established under the Cancún Adaptation Framework. Developing countries agreed on this compromise after intensive discussions in the plenary, which had in return ensured them a review of the mechanism's structures, its mandate and efficiency by 2016. With this review, there is still the possibility to move the mechanism out of the Cancún Adaptation Framework and lift it to a higher level in the future. Developing countries further managed to include a passage in the preamble which acknowledges that "loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change includes, and in some cases involves more than, that which can be reduced by adaptation." This can be considered a first recognition of the fact that loss and damage goes beyond adaptation.

(9) Adaptation

With the negotiations on a mechanism for loss and damage being at the centre stage of the negotiations, the general focus of the attention was on how to deal with climate related impacts that go beyond adaptation. In parallel, however, discussions on adaptation-related issues were held in different other fora. One issue was the question on the continuation and future design of the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP), which supports developing countries in the analysis and assessment of adaptation-related issues and is to lead to improved decision-making and implementation of measures. In the final decision (Decision 17/CP.19, Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2), Parties agreed on a continuation of the work programme for further 5 years and decided to widen its scope and enhance the coordination with other bodies and processes. The SBSTA, responsible for carrying out the NWP, is to inter alia consider the issues of ecosystems, human settlements, water resources and health and to further discuss issues for consideration under the NWP at its 41st session in December 2014. Parties further agreed that the activities undertaken under the work programme should integrate gender issues, indigenous and traditional knowledge and the role and impacts on ecosystems. SBSTA is further requested to review the Nairobi work programme at its 48th session and to report to the COP at its 24th session.

Warsaw also saw the presentation of the Adaptation Committee's first thematic report on the current status of adaptation, which was generally well received. The Adaptation Committee (AC), which was established in 2010 in Cancún as the main body dealing with adaptation issues under the Convention, had held its first meeting in 2012 and had elaborated a draft workplan, which had been adopted by the COP in Doha. In Warsaw, Parties welcomed the progress made in the implementation of this three-year work plan, and encouraged the AC to continue its work. Given the difficult financial situation of the committee, all Parties, not only developed countries, as G77/China had demanded, were again encouraged to make available sufficient resources for the successful implementation of the workplan in the future (Decision 16/CP.19, Work of the Adaptation Committee, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2). The general lack of funding for adaptation measures was highlighted by developing countries as a crucial problem in several meetings. Against this background, it was praised as a ray of hope when the Adaptation Fund was able to meet its goal of raising 100 million USD due to the pledges made by several European countries in Warsaw.

(10) Finance

The mobilisation of adequate financing balanced between mitigation and adaptation measures has been one of the major "crunch issues" in the negotiations for a long time. With the establishment and subsequent operationalization of the Green Climate Fund, hopes of developing countries had been high prior to Warsaw that industrialised countries would start capitalising the fund in order to raise it from its current status of an "empty shell".

The GCF's incomplete operationalization had made industrialised countries' finance ministries hesitate to commit financial resources. For a full operationalization, the relationship between the COP and the GCF had to be clarified and adopted by this year's COP. To this end the UNFCCC's Standing Committee on Climate Finance had prepared draft arrangements that passed muster without strong dissent among country delegations (Decision 7/CP.19, Report of the Standing Committee on Finance to the Conference of the Parties, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1). The GCF is to be guided by the COP. It will submit annual

reports on policy implementation, programme priorities and eligibility criteria, as well as activities, financial resources and status of allocation for mitigation and adaptation (Decision 5/CP.19, Arrangements between the Conference of the Parties and the Green Climate Fund, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

The GCF has now concluded its interim stage. The COP's guidance to the GCF includes to: balance resource allocation between mitigation and adaptation, but to also ensure resources for other activities; to pursue a country-driven approach; and to take into special account the adaptation needs of vulnerable developing countries. It also confirms that all developing countries are eligible for resources of the GCF. The COP also provided additional guidance on the expeditious operationalization of the GCF and its 2014 workplan, urging the GCF Board to finalise as soon as possible the essential requirements to receive, manage, programme and disburse financial resources that the GCF Board had identified at its fifth meeting in October 2013. The COP called for ambitious and timely contributions by developed countries with a view to devise a formal replenishment process by COP 20 in 2014, underlining that the initial mobilisation should reach a very significant scale (Decision 4/CP.19, Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1). The GCF will thus move from its three-year-long "becoming-fully-operational" institutionalisation to an actual operating phase, where questions of institutional arrangements are replaced with questions of funding priorities for transformational change in developing countries.

However, hopes of developing countries that further institutionalisation of the GCF would lead to an increase in international financing by developed countries were disappointed. Discussing the extension of the Work Programme on Long-Term Finance, developing countries stated that they expected clear and ambitious pledges for funding by developed countries, and a roadmap for scaling up current climate finance levels of 10bn USD annually to the 100 bn USD from 2020 commitment, including a mid-term target of 70 bn USD annually by 2016. Some developed countries, most notably Australia, but also the USA, rejected continued financing commitments or quantified pathways.

The decision finally adopted omits any clear language on a financing roadmap, but urges developed countries "to maintain continuity of mobilization of public climate finance at increasing levels from the fast-start finance period in line with their commitment to the goal of mobilizing USD 100 billion per year in 2020 from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources". Developed countries are requested to prepare biennial submissions on their strategies and approaches for pathways in order to scale up mid-term climate finance. The decision also recognises the financial pledges made by countries at COP19, including the contributions to fulfil the fundraising goal of 100 million USD for the Adaptation Fund. The Work Programme on Long-Term Finance will continue until 2020, and will also now include biennial high-level ministerial dialogues starting next year (Decision 3/CP.19, Long-term climate finance, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1).

(11) Technology

Technology transfer issues continued their slow but steady implementation process in Warsaw. Notably, Parties agreed on the modalities and procedures of the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) as had been suggested by the CTCN's Advisory Board. In the previous year, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) had been chosen to host the CTCN as a leader of a consortium including the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). The modalities are now in place. The CTCN will support developing countries in devising technology needs assessments (TNAs), national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs)

and national climate strategies. It will also foster collaboration and access to information to accelerate climate technology transfer, and strengthen networks, partnerships and capacity-building. It will consult with the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) in order to provide for coherent and synergistic approaches (Decision 25/CP.19, Modalities and procedures of the Climate Technology Centre and Network and its Advisory Board, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.2).

(12) Conclusions and Outlook

Warsaw once again starkly highlighted the sharp divisions and lack of trust among countries. As result, the final text from ADP Workstream 1 hardly goes beyond the lowest common denominator. The reference to “contributions” instead of “commitments” accommodates the position of the LMDCs that there should be no binding commitments for non-Annex I countries. On the other side, Annex I countries prevented any differentiation between themselves and non-Annex I countries regarding the legal nature of their participation in the future agreement; instead of differentiated provisions there is only one set of provisions that applies to all countries. The late date, the Lima COP, which was ultimately agreed on for the identification of the information that is to be submitted alongside the “intended contributions” is not helpful for ensuring that transparent and adequate contributions will be tabled in the first quarter of 2015. There is also no language whatsoever on what is going to be the process for the international consideration of the intended contributions once they have been submitted. While the submission of intended contributions is to be without prejudice to their legal nature, given the negotiation dynamics the 2015 agreement thus currently seems to be on course to continue the current structure: non-binding pledges that are determined purely bottom-up instead of being negotiated internationally.

The ADP Workstream 2’s discussion on enhancing pre-2020 ambition remained in a virtual deadlock during the Warsaw talks. As in Workstream 1, Parties agreed only on their lowest common denominator: continuing negotiations at ministerial level in June.

Looking at the recurring patterns of deliberations on finance within the UNFCCC, matters of form, such as institutional arrangements, pass with relative ease, while matters of substance, such as raising ambition of financing commitments, or clear roadmaps including defined milestones, result in by now well-known stand-offs between developed and developing countries. There certainly is no lack of disbursement channels, and with the final steps to a full operationalisation of the GCF, another major one will soon be open. However, this also means serious work for the Fund’s Board to establish clear funding priorities and criteria, but also for developing countries to demonstrate clear institutional structures that enable them to devise truly transformational approaches to mitigation and adaptation at a national level.

The successful full launch of the Climate Technology Centre and Network may well be attributed to its "soft" mandate of capacity support, which anyhow will very much depend on a continuous and dependable funding base that has not been established yet.

Against the background of the lack of progress in most other areas, the establishment of the “Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts” can be considered a meaningful outcome. Despite this new mechanism sitting under the Cancún Adaptation Framework, this step can be seen as a first recognition of the fact that climate change induces impacts that cannot be dealt with by implementing adaptation measures and that developing countries will need to be assisted in coping with these impacts. However, for this decision to become part of a larger success story and in order to adequately assist countries in coping with loss and damage, the mandate and scope of the mechanism will have to be further strengthened.

Similarly, the decisions taken on REDD+ were greeted by many as a silver lining. With these decisions, the main chapters of the “rulebook for REDD+” have been finalized. However, the provisions are rather general and it remains to be seen how they will be applied on the ground and how they will influence ongoing REDD+ activities in developing countries. In addition, besides outstanding issues, such as the agreement on further guidance for reporting on safeguards, one central challenge remains: the lack of funding for REDD+ activities. Parties in Warsaw reiterated that financing will come from a large variety of sources, without further specifying where money will actually come from. Similarly, by assigning a “key role” to the Green Climate Fund, Parties decided to assign a core function for REDD+ financing to an entity which is currently still in the progress of becoming fully operational and yet to be endowed with funding.

A fundamental question is which countries are supposed to be the drivers for the 2015 agreement. Among the “big three”, the USA, China and the EU, China continues to maintain a very defensive position and while many lauded the US stance in Warsaw as constructive, it continues to be tied down by its domestic situation, where large parts of the Republican Party deny that climate change even exists. The EU has traditionally been the motor of the climate negotiations, but it is currently only committed to keeping its emissions stable for the rest of the decade and only some of its member states have been willing to put meaningful amounts of finance on the table. As a result, the EU’s Durban alliance fractured one year later already since the EU was not able to meet its partners' expectations on mitigation and finance. It is therefore currently unclear where the impetus for a meaningful 2015 agreement is supposed to come from.

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