

Chile/Madrid Climate Change Conference: Thursday, 12 December 2019

The Chile/Madrid Climate Change Conference began with a stocktaking of progress by the COP Presidency, followed in the evening by COP, CMP, CMA plenaries to adopt a handful of issues. Throughout the day, negotiations continued in closed-door negotiations on outstanding issues.

COP Presidency Stocktaking Plenary

COP 25 President Carolina Schmidt (Chile) opened the stocktake by stressing to parties that citizens, youth, and women are “demanding ambitious outcomes” rather than “procedural solutions.” She invited ministers to report on the current state of negotiations.

On Article 6, Minister James Shaw (New Zealand) noted that he, with Minister Barbara Creecy (South Africa), held bilateral meetings with parties on Tuesday and Wednesday, and that parties demonstrated a high level of consensus on, among others: willingness to work towards a mutually acceptable outcome; commitment to environmental integrity; and the need for predictable and adequate resources for adaptation. He said that ministers would hold further bilateral meetings throughout the day, with the aim of producing text for Friday morning, 13 December.

COP 25 President Schmidt noted that there was no consensus in the contact group related to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the CMP, given the potential implications for the CDM of adopting decisions under Article 6. She said that the Presidency would consult on the implications.

On the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM), Minister Simon Stiell (Grenada) reported that ministers convened bilateral discussions and requested two delegates to facilitate technical drafting work on potential resolutions. Ministers focused on, among others: the tasks of the potential expert group on action and support; the functions, modalities, and activities of the potential “Santiago Network”; and how the WIM Executive Committee will work with the Standing Committee on Finance to further mobilize access to finance for loss and damage. He underlined that ministers would put forward their own proposal to the COP Presidency if no agreed text was available by the end of the consultations.

On decisions 1/CP.25, 1/CMP.15, and 1/CMA.2 (the outcome decisions for the meeting), Ministers Teresa Ribera (Spain) and Masagos Zulkifli (Singapore) reported on ministerial consultations, which included a series of bilateral consultations. They highlighted key issues regarding raised ambition: a work programme on pre-2020 implementation and ambition; references to NDCs in 2020; land and ocean issues; and loss and damage. The Co-Facilitators invited further party submissions, focused on bridging proposals, to feed into the revision of the three draft decisions.

On response measures, Minister Hussain Rasheed Hassan (Maldives) reported on bilateral consultations held with groups. He noted further consultations, co-facilitated by Ambassador Marc Vanheukelen (EU), would be held during the day.

Rodrigo Olsen, COP 25 Presidency, reported on three items under consultations led by the Presidency, noting constructive discussions. On the next periodic review of the long-term global goal under the Convention (LTGG), he said parties were close to agreement, but had decided to wait for clarity on the outcomes of other consultations with potential connections to this issue.

On the report and terms of reference of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE), he said that parties had engaged constructively; that the draft text still contained options; and that consultations were ongoing.

On gender and climate change, he reported that consultations were still ongoing.

COP 25 President Schmidt informed that the first part of the closing plenaries would take up items on which negotiations had already concluded, as well as the issues on which the Presidency had been consulting, stressing that these must conclude on Thursday. She further informed that she had asked negotiations on finance items to finish by 5:00 pm on Thursday. Noting that four outstanding issues remained, she asked parties to engage in solution-oriented discussions to deliver a strong, concrete outcome.

Several parties expressed concern about the progress of the conference and currently unresolved items.

Egypt, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed the need to move towards implementation by agreeing on priority elements that are needed by developing countries, particularly loss and damage, response measures, the periodic review of the LTGG, and finance. He expressed concern with the slow progress on the issues of support to developing countries and on the continuation of processes related to enhanced action pre- and post-2020, stressing the need for an ambitious outcome that reflects the responsibility of those who must take the lead.

The EU emphasized ensuring environmental integrity under Article 6, and expressed support for a strong message of ambition that welcomes the efforts by civil society, youth, and businesses. Switzerland, for the ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY GROUP (EIG), called for forward-looking and solution-oriented engagement.

Noting that carbon neutrality is “not a choice, but an imperative,” SWEDEN called for a robust Article 6 framework, a forward-looking review of the WIM, and the inclusion of human rights and gender equity.

Bhutan, for the LDCs, pressed for a COP decision requiring ambitious, new or updated NDCs.

Malaysia, for the LIKE-MINDED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, stressed the importance of the pre-2020 process in giving the post-2020 framework a “strong start,” and recalled the importance of adaptation, finance, and capacity-building.

Australia, for the UMBRELLA GROUP, outlined its priorities for strong outcomes on the gender action plan and Article 6.

GRENADA warned that certain countries “are proceeding as though there is no climate emergency,” and urged parties to concentrate their efforts on the needs of the most vulnerable.

Pointing to “unmet promises” and shortfalls in emission reductions pre-2020, INDIA cautioned against “repeating history” and urged progress on implementation, especially by addressing the issues of finance and technology transfer.

Guatemala, for the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), emphasized that “the world is waiting for an unequivocal message of ambition.” Belize, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES, called on all parties to submit ambitious new or revised NDCs in early 2020.

COP 25 President Schmidt closed the stocktaking by urging all parties to bring results on Friday, 13 December, based on their collective work, and calling for an “outcome to equal the historical challenge that we are facing.”

COP 25 Closing Plenary

COP 25 President Schmidt opened the session highlighting that 12 December 2019 marks the fourth anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement.

Report on Credentials: The COP adopted the report (FCCC/CP/2019/12).

Report of the SBSTA: The COP took note of the oral report and adopted the SBSTA 50 report (FCCC/SBSTA/2019/2) and the draft SBSTA 51 report (FCCC/SBSTA/2019/L.12).

Report of the SBI: The COP took note of the oral report and adopted the SBI 50 report (FCCC/SBI/2019/9 and Add.1) and the draft SBI 51 report (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.17).

The COP adopted two SBI draft decisions, on the terms of reference for the review of the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention (FCCC/SBI/2019/9/Add.1) and on national adaptation plans (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.21).

Reporting from, and Review of, Annex I Parties: The COP adopted the decision (FCCC/SBI/2019/9/Add.1) and took note of the SBI conclusions on this matter.

Report of the Adaptation Committee: COP 25 President Schmidt noted that the SBI could not complete its consideration of the item at this session.

Development and Transfer of Technologies: Joint annual report of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN): The COP adopted the decision (FCCC/SB/2019/L.6).

Capacity Building under the Convention: The COP adopted decisions on: the report of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.27); the fourth comprehensive review of the framework for capacity-building in developing countries (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.28); and the review of the PCCB (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.30).

Matters Relating to the LDCs: The COP took note of SBI conclusions on this matter (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.26).

Consideration of Proposals for Amendments to the Convention: Proposal from Papua New Guinea and Mexico: COP President Schmidt reported divergent views. Rule 16 will be applied.

Administrative, Financial, and Institutional Matters: Audit report and financial statements for 2018: Budget performance for the biennium 2018–2019: The COP adopted a decision (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.23/Add.1)

Programme budget for the biennium 2020–2021: The COP adopted a decision (FCCC/SBI/2019/9/Add.1).

Decision-making in the UNFCCC process: COP President Schmidt reported that parties had noted the importance of the issue, but did not agree on conclusions. Rule 16 will be applied.

CMP 15 Closing Plenary

Report on Credentials: The CMP adopted the report (FCCC/KP/CMP/2019/7).

Report of the SBSTA: The CMP took note of the oral report by the SBSTA Chair on SBSTA 50 and 51 and adopted the relevant reports (FCCC/SBSTA/2019/12 and L.12).

Report of the SBI: The CMP took note of the oral report by the SBI Chair on SBI 50 and 51 and adopted the relevant reports (FCCC/SBI/2019/9 and Add.1, and L.17).

Reporting from, and Review of, Annex I Parties: National communications: The CMP took note of the SBI conclusions on this item.

Matters relating to the CDM: The CMP adopted a decision (FCCC/KP/CMP/2019/L.2).

Capacity Building under the Kyoto Protocol: The CMP took note of the SBI conclusions on this item.

Report on the High-level Ministerial Round Table on Increased Ambition of Kyoto Protocol Commitments: CMP 15 President Schmidt informed that informal consultations did not result in conclusions. Rule 16 will apply.

Administrative, Financial and Institutional Matters: Audit report and financial statements for 2018: Budget performance for the biennium 2018–2019: The CMP adopted decisions (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.23/Add.2 and 9/Add.1).

CMA 2 Closing Plenary

Report on Credentials: The CMA approved the report on credentials (FCCC/PA/CMA/2019/5) and the credentials of the US and Niue which were received after the preparation of the report. CHINA requested clarity regarding the legal implications of not submitting credentials on time. CMA President Schmidt clarified that this would mean the countries in question are able to participate provisionally, following rule 21 of the draft rules of procedure.

Report of the SBSTA: The CMA took note of the oral report of the SBSTA Chair, the draft report of SBSTA 51 (FCCC/SBSTA/2019/L.12), and the report of SBSTA 50 (FCCC/SBSTA/2019/2).

Report of the SBI: The CMA took note of the oral report of the SBI Chair, the draft report of SBI 51 (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.17), and the report of SBI 50 (FCCC/SBI/2019/9 and Add.1).

Report of the Adaptation Committee: CMA 2 President Schmidt reported that there was no draft decision under this item.

Development and Transfer of Technologies: Joint Annual Report of the TEC and CTCN: The CMA adopted a decision (FCCC/SB/2019/L.7).

Capacity Building under the Paris Agreement: The CMA adopted a decision (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.29).

Administrative, Financial and Institutional Matters: The CMA endorsed decisions adopted by the COP (FCCC/SBI/2019/L.23/Add.1 and FCCC/SBI/2019/9/Add.1).

In the Corridors

Even as the plenary hall began to fill for the first part of the COP closing on Thursday evening, there were whispers of further delays. “The plenary can’t be starting on time,” one delegate said as she scanned the room. “No one important enough is here yet.” Elsewhere in the venue, ministerial bilaterals were still untangling disagreements in the WIM review and Article 6. Even as the gavel fell to adopt some items, the COP President reminded those assembled that the most difficult discussions were “still ongoing.”

Across the venue, in delegation offices, keen-eyed observers noted a number of meetings between different parties and the incoming COP 26 Presidency. Some offered that the final outcomes in Madrid, no matter how technical, may either curb or amplify the momentum with which negotiations resume a year from now. “We need to give a firm stepping stone for Glasgow,” one participant stressed. “The more we can conclude now, the better.”

Still, discussions around Article 6 were noticeably less optimistic than before, particularly among those tasked with the technical negotiations, other delegates urged for deliberation rather than haste. “Given the choice between a burnt cake and no dessert,” one cautioned, “perhaps it’s better to have no outcome at all — at least for now.”

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of the Chile/Madrid Climate Change Conference will be available on Monday, 16 December 2019, at <http://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop25/enb/>