Further discussions on “shared vision” in AWG LCA workshop

Poznan, 4 Dec (Meena Raman) – Exchanges on “shared vision” continued among parties at a workshop on a second day during the climate talks under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This issue has emerged as the major theme of the Poznan talks.

The first part of the workshop was held on 2 December afternoon, with power point presentations by major countries and groupings including the EU, Japan, small island states, China, Brazil and India. (See report in TWN update 3). The discussions continued on 3 December morning with interventions from other countries, including the United States and South Africa for the Africa Group.

The workshop was held under the ad hoc working group on long-term cooperative action (AWG- LCA), whose chair Luiz Machado of Brazil explained that this was an informal exchange of views to deepen understanding and clarify proposals on how to enhance the Convention’s implementation.

Machado reminded parties to look at the big picture and concentrate on what kind of cooperation was needed to to make possible the level of action that is necessary to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

As in the previous day, developing countries that spoke had the same view that a “shared vision” cannot be one-dimensional (i.e. focused only on establishing a global target for emission reduction) but had to be comprehensive, encompassing also adaptation and North-South transfers of finance and technology. However, while the larger developing countries downplayed the need to set a global mitigation goal, some other developing countries supported such a goal.

“Shared vision” is one of the most contentious issues in the Poznan talks. On one hand, many developing countries (including some of the largest ones) do not want to set a global goal (at least at this stage) because it may also include a target for developing countries, and moreover there are no concrete plans for providing the finance and technology required by the developing countries.

The EU on 2 December had advocated a 50% global cut by 2050 based on 1990 levels. On 3 December, the US, in an unprecedented move at the climate talks, also supported a 50% global cut by 2050 from 1990 levels. (The US had not before announced such a target. Its president-elect Barrack Obama had mentioned these figures in a video-conference speech a fortnight ago. Norway said that global emissions should most likely be reduced by as much as 85 percent from 2000 to 2050. Japan mentioned a long-term global cut of 50% by 2050 but did not provide a base year for such reductions.

Speaking towards the end of the workshop, the United States said that the shared vision should be visionary and inspirational. It should have a sense of resolve to meet the objectives of the nature of the challenge. It should not only encompass the challenge but also the opportunities such as in energy security and resilience in the sectors of the economy. Any vision should inspire all to contribute to their best ability. All Parties in the varying range of development have different roles to contribute based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. On the long-term global goal, emission reductions should be 50% by 2050 from 1990 levels.

In relation to mid-term targets, the EU said that developed countries should reduce emissions by 30% by 2020 based on 1990 levels. Norway said that it should be 25-40% by 2020 for developed countries. They also said that emissions in developing countries have to substantially deviate from projected baseline emissions within the next few decades. The EU said that developing countries should contribute according
to their respective capabilities, with 15-30% deviation from business as usual by 2020.

The EU had on Tuesday, in response to a question said that the per capita emissions for all citizens of the world should be 2 tonnes per capita by 2050, adding that there is a need to delink economic growth and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Several developing countries stressed that the shared vision's overall global goal is about meeting the ultimate objective of the Convention as reflected in Article 2, and was not simply that of setting a number for emission cuts in the long-term.

(Article 2 states that the ultimate objective of the Convention is to achieve the stabilisation of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within the time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.)

Several developing countries also said that the shared vision should also be about cooperating on the means of implementation to achieve the objectives of the Convention. Some asked why the long-term global goal should just be about emission reductions, and not about the goal of ensuring financial resources and technology transfer to developing countries and of meeting adaptation needs.

Other developing countries such as Bolivia emphasised the need for a much broader and deeper vision that addresses the structural causes of the climate change problem which is rooted in the capitalist system, and requires changes in the production and consumption model of development.

Several developing countries stressed that while the developed countries should take the lead in making deeper and more ambitious cuts in their emissions, there was a need to recognise that many developing countries are already undertaking national mitigation actions. Much more can be done if they were enabled by financial and technological support.

Argentina said that the purpose of a shared vision as reflected in the Bali Action Plan (BAP) adopted by Parties last year is to meet the ultimate objective of the Convention, in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Convention and taking into account social and economic conditions and other relevant factors. It also recalled that the extent to which developing countries will effectively implement their commitments will depend on the effective implementation by developed countries of their commitments under the Convention related to the provision of financial resources and technology transfer, which takes into account that economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of the developing countries. “What we are asking is the acknowledgment of this fact and support developing countries to make the progress needed despite the obstacles due to complex situations,” it said.

Ecuador speaking for a group of Latin American countries (including Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay) said that shared vision is a cooperation platform. Shared vision should include all the elements of the BAP. It recognises that all Parties need to step up their efforts. It should reaffirm the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and recognise the historical responsibility of developed countries. It should provide for funding and technology to developing countries from developed countries and the overall global goal is to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention. It said that the mitigation commitments of developed countries should be based on historical and current emissions as well as on science, with medium term targets, too.

(Argentina and Ecuador had made separate presentations in the first part of the workshop on Tuesday).

South Africa speaking for the Africa Group said that on shared vision, Parties are informed by ultimate objective of the Convention which relates to the need for stabilisation of the climate as well as sustainable development. It said that the BAP describes the shared vision in accordance with the provisions and principles of the Convention. The shared vision is more than only a number and more than a longer-term global goal for emissions reductions. It is not just about stabilisation of the climate, but is critically also about adaptation and the enabling of sustainable development. It said that the long term cooperative action is not only about dealing with the future but is about developed countries
meeting their existing commitments. It said that shared vision is also about a vision of the means of implementation. There should be adequate provision of finance and technology and for developed countries to meet their commitments. As regards the stabilisation of the climate, it has to be science based. It said that the long-term global goal for emissions reductions should be an aspirational goal, provided it is ambitious and has a base year. The goal can be a 50% reduction by 2050 and for developed countries, 25-40% by 2020.

**Norway** said that it was imperative to have agreement in Copenhagen on a long term goal and target for reductions on emissions. It was of the view that the increase in global mean temperature should not exceed 2 degrees C. Citing the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it said that this means that global emissions have to be reduced by 50-85 percent from 2000 to 2050, most likely as much as 85 percent, and to peak no later than 2015. To achieve such a reduction scenario, developed countries as a group must reduce their emissions by 25-40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020. It said that such a target should be established early in the process, before the discussions on distribution of efforts between countries and sectors take place. It also said that emissions in developing countries have to substantially deviate from projected baseline emissions within the next few decades and should be supported and enabled by technology and substantial financial support and capacity-building from developed countries. It also said that a shared vision must thus elaborate on the establishment of the necessary incentives for turning the global economy into a low carbon economy. It said that necessary measures for the expansion of the carbon market and the establishment of a global price on all greenhouse gas emissions, should be part of a shared vision.

**Indonesia** said that a shared vision should take into account the bigger picture that included adaptation, technology transfer and financial resources for developing countries. It should take into account the legitimate priority needs of developing countries in meeting their sustainable development objectives.

**Singapore** said that while industrialised countries should take the lead in emissions reductions, developing countries should take on voluntary mitigation actions as set out in the BAP. It said that developing countries could deviate from business as usual by making improvements in energy efficiency and by undertaking sustainable development policies, actions and measures with the support of technology and finance. It also stressed that measures taken to combat climate change should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.

**Venezuela** also stressed that the shared vision should be based on the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, which are legal instruments to address the realities and asymmetries between countries. It said that mitigation actions by developed countries ensure mandatory compliance in emission reductions based on their historical responsibility for such emissions. It also said that there was an urgent need to promote change in the present production and consumption model if the ultimate objective of the Convention is to be achieved.

**Bolivia** said that from colonisation to industrialisation, the capitalist system is responsible for the destruction of the planet and for the asymmetries in the world which generates luxury for some while millions die. Everything is converted to goods and commodities including water, ancestral lands and life itself. For Bolivia, a profound and deep goal is in changing the capitalist model to one that is complementary and in harmony with nature. It also stressed that there is already a shared vision that is in the Convention that requires the meeting of the commitments by developed countries. Emission reductions in developed countries should be deep and equivalent to their historical responsibility. Technologies for addressing climate change should be available in the public domain and not privatised under a monopoly system. Developed countries should not insist on patents and intellectual property rights at the cost of the planet. They should pay for all the financial and non-financial costs for causing climate change. The financial resources needed should be at least equivalent to the amount spent by developed nations to rescue their financial institutions and the wars they have caused. The planet is more important than Wall Street. The non-financial costs include the right to sustainable development, substantial reduction in poverty, lack of respect to for the rights of indigenous peoples, and violation of the right to food and health. There is a real need for change in the economic and financial system, as well as in the consumption and production model. Only then can there be a truly shared vision.

**Philippines** said that it was committed to a shared vision when it ratified the Convention. It shared the vision of the ultimate objective of the Convention and
its parameters. This vision has not been shared so far. Commitments by developed countries have not been meaningfully fulfilled. In modifying the long-term trends in GHG emissions, there is a need for radical change in production and consumption patterns. There has not been the provision of new and adequate financial resources including for technology transfer. Unless there are guarantees given in this process and agreement reached though the setting up mechanisms for technology transfer and financial resources upfront, there cannot fully be a shared vision. Shared vision is therefore the full implementation of the Convention.

Malaysia said that if the shared vision is to have credibility and “buy in”, then there was a need to address all the outstanding deficits that have not been met under the Convention. Share vision is not in a vacuum but within the context of economic development and improvement in livelihoods. Shared vision is in the context of developing the need for developing countries to reach developed status. Everyone has the right to development. Developed countries have a historical responsibility and need to show a leadership role. It said that it was necessary to consider including the resources that must be made available to developing countries in a fair and equitable manner. “We are not here to renegotiate the Convention. It is about the enhancing of implementation,” Malaysia said.

Pakistan said that the shared vision is about a long term co-operative action. It said that Parties were not in Poznan to reinvent the wheel. There was a shared vision in Rio (Rio Summit of 1992), the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. The BAP shared vision is about addressing the implementation deficit. On the long term global goal, Pakistan asked if it was just about emissions reduction. “Why is it not about finance and technology? Why is it not about targets that can be measured, verified and reported for adaptation efforts that the LDC are enabled to undertake?” Pakistan asked. It said that technology and finance are key. In relation to the targets for emission reductions, it said that the science has advanced and there is need for additional data on what the specific cuts should be and what this means for developing countries.

Switzerland speaking for the Environmental Integrity Group said that it welcomes early agreement on the ranges for emissions reduction for Annex 1 countries. It said that Monaco aims for reductions of 20% by 2020 and 60% by 2050. It said Switzerland is committed to the EU targets. For Non-Annex 1 countries like South Korea, there would be substantial deviation from business as usual levels by 2020 and Mexico is also expecting to reduce GHGs.

Gabon said that based on the principle of shared responsibility of all, each has to contribute to struggle in the fight to combat climate change. While Annex 1 countries need to reduce their emissions, developing countries too have to strive towards low emissions. “The question is if we are all worthy of our planet which is now burning?” asked Gabon. It emphasised the need for all to act in unity.

Papua New Guinea said that climate change is not about the science but about the livelihoods of people. Given the ultimate objective of the Convention, there was a need be on the aggressive side of the reduction ranges. It said that developed countries need to have hard and deep targets. There is a need for mobilisation of resources for developing countries to act. It said that developing countries can have aspirational objectives and deviate from business as usual significantly where possible. There is a need to support positive incentives and sustained finance and technology. It said that PNG is making efforts to see how it can reduce emissions by 50% by 2050 and be carbon neutral, while expanding GDP per capita.

Saudi Arabia said that equity in the Convention should ensure that the responsibility of all is fair and proportionate. Since Saudi Arabia is an oil exporter and where the economy is based on oil and oil exports, the solution has to be with long-term efforts and requires assistance. Solutions that are adopted must not damage countries that depend on fossil fuels and oil exports. It pointed out that oil products are heavily taxed even as coal is subsidised by industrialised countries.

The Chair of the AWG LCA, Luis Machado said that the workshop provided an excellent opportunity for Parties to clarify a number of issues and be better prepared to move forward on the issue of shared vision. He said that a contact group will meet on Friday, 5th December. The Chair will prepare a summary of the main points raised in this workshop that will provide inputs for further work.