The Importance of Being Transparent

Earlier this week, parties confirmed the importance of civil society participation in these negotiations. For example, the US reminded why this is essential and has helped make substantive progress possible.

First, though designated as ‘observers’, civil society representatives actually do much more. Providing technical and practical experience and advocating for strong provisions and outcomes, participation contributes to making these talks fairer and more balanced between rich and poor, developed and developing, and tiny and huge delegations.

Secondly, wherever they come from, whatever they think about climate change, civil society organisations represent the diversity of citizens from around the world. This provides essential input and balance to the proceedings.

Of course, the negotiations process needs periods where Parties work constructively among themselves, but the balance between open and closed sessions needs constant attention, or closing the doors will send a negative message to the nearly 7 billion whose lives depend on the decisions being made.

Soon, hopefully really soon, global society will have to implement what delegations are thinking, writing and agreeing. How can we change this world that needs so much changing, if the outcomes are not understood and agreed among all those represented by delegations?

When the doors are open, not only do the eyes and the ears of billions come to understand these vital proceedings, it helps us all prepare a safer future.

Delegates, it is always in order to ensure that civil society inclusiveness and transparency are operationalized. Even when civil society sometimes criticise and disagree with you, we are all here to make our common future safer and to preserve this world for the next generations. Let’s open the doors!

Balancing the LULUCF Books

Something new and exciting is happening in the LULUCF discussion. People are starting to talk about why it matters and what it should accomplish.

We can thank the Chair of the AWG-KP for clearly identifying the proper purpose of the negotiations – to explore how the rules and mechanisms of LULUCF could strengthen the level of ambition of Annex I Parties, and also how the rules could contribute to making these talks fairer and more balanced between rich and poor, developed and developing, and tiny and huge delegations.

Delegates, let’s open the doors!

Moving Towards an Adaptation Committee

ECO supports the call from many developing country Parties for a new adaptation institution. Adaptation is still highly fragmented under the UNFCCC. While climate impacts are already being widely felt, there are large gaps in capacity and understanding how to adapt now and in the future at all levels, from community to national.

Of the three options in para 7 of Chapter II in the LCA text, ECO favours the establishment of an Adaptation Committee. The committee would be a coordinating body to consolidate the different adaptation fragments under the UNFCCC, including elaborating recommendations to the COP as they emerge.

The committee would be composed of experts with practical or technical expertise on planning and implementing adaptation or other relevant background. The members would be nominated by Parties representing UN constituencies, with a developing country majority.

It is desirable to include non-governmental experts (with the right to speak in meetings) from organisations such as UN bodies, the Red Cross, NGOs and civil society more broadly. This is a bit unusual, but it makes sense as much of the expertise on adaptation currently resides outside government.

ECO also suggests limiting the role of this body so that it has no direct role in the funding of adaptation: that responsibility should be handled through new institutions that currently resides outside government.

A key function of the Adaptation Committee would be to provide guidance and support on issues that emerge through the learning-by-doing process that adaptation to climate change necessarily is. The committee...
Adaptation, continued from page 1

tee should identify themes needing further analysis and advise on best implementation practice, as well as link to any future equivalent of the Nairobi Work Programme.

Another important function would be to provide an interface between the UNFCCC and the work of regional centres (whether existing bodies or new institutions), to ensure that sufficient information and support on adaptation is available to Parties.

Finally, the Adaptation Committee would report to the COP yearly on its activities and its findings and make recommendations.

ECO is well aware that Annex I Parties generally do not favour new institutions. They are worried about the costs and possible duplication of roles with existing bodies, as well as the time needed to get a new body up and running. So why can these functions not be performed by existing bodies? Here are a few reasons:

• The LDC Expert Group already has a full work programme on supporting implementation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).
• The Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) is focusing on tech transfer, of which adaptation technologies are only a minor element at the current time.
• The Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) on national communications can provide lessons learnt for adaptation strategies, but this is only a small aspect of adaptation.
• The Nairobi Work Programme does not have an expert group. While NWP has provided much information, workshops and reports, it has had no mandate to provide recommendations for implementation, and it is limited to scientific and technical support.

Taken together, therefore, the existing expert groups and the Nairobi Work Programme still do not fulfill the necessarily broad scope of an integrated adaptation effort, and changing their mandates would be more difficult than establishing a new and purpose-built body.

ECO considers that a favorable decision on forming the Adaptation Committee will be one element of an ambitious Adaptation Framework for Implementation to be agreed in Cancun. Of course, such a committee would not be expected to overcome all adaptation challenges. But putting it in operation would help to build much-needed trust, showing that Annex I countries really will support adaptation, especially in vulnerable countries.

Gender Equality and the Climate Fund

Delegates drafting text on the governance arrangements for a new global climate fund are reminded of a simple fact: climate change impacts and solutions are not gender neutral. The new fund must have principles of gender equality at the core.

Whether considering human vulnerability to the effects of climate change, adaptation to those effects, or ways of reducing levels of greenhouse gases – women and men are going to be impacted differently.

For example, concerning adaptation, it is women who are responsible for 60% to 80% of the food produced in most developing countries, and they are often hardest hit as increased climate variability makes agriculture more unpredictable. But it is just as true that women are the key agents in building climate-resilient solutions and food security in a world of climate change. A new fund must ensure that adequate, new and additional adaptation finance reaches them.

Similarly, mitigation efforts can turn out to be false solutions if they threaten the rights and livelihoods of women. In the rush to biofuels it is poor women who stand to lose the most, since they are reliant on the lands targeted for biofuel production, and have the least to gain, as production of cash crops is usually dominated by men.

The evidence from decades of donor aid and humanitarian programming underlines the need to address gender-differentiated realities in managing and disbursing funds. The new global climate fund must learn from this experience and build into its core responsive principles of gender equality.

Amongst other vital provisions, ECO calls for the Board of the new fund to reflect equal gender representation. Job descriptions and terms of reference should also specify the importance of a gendered perspective in articulating development issues and climate change impacts.

Ensuring that women are included on the Fund Board is an important first step to guarantee that the Fund will respond to the needs of both poor women and men and achieving greater gender parity.

No existing global climate fund has yet ensured equitable gender representation in its governance structures. This is a trend which must be reversed so that women benefit from, and are not harmed by, climate finance going forward. It’s time for negotiators to bring gender into the Fund’s agenda.