



COP23 roundup: Progress of negotiations and outcomes on agriculture

Li Shuo, Greenpeace East Asia, reiterated the feeling that the first week has been smooth overall. *“The Talanoa Dialogue discussions have gone well. Negotiations over transparency have gone surprisingly well, producing a good informal note and moving into substantive discussions. Discussions of the global stocktake lost some time in procedural back and forth, but also produced an informal note this morning. The notable exception is talks over nationally determined contributions, where there are worrying signs; a 180-page note suggests numerous and complicated points of disagreement remain as ministers arrive to begin the more political process in week two.*

He was asked if there has been progress on the question of pre-2020 actions, where vulnerable countries have been pressing for attention to immediate action – including outstanding commitments from Annex I countries under the expiring Kyoto Protocol; rich countries prefer to focus on the incoming Paris Agreement.

“Substantively, there are genuine concerns from developing countries that a lot of previous commitments have not been fully respected or effectively delivered, things such as finance, technology, and capacity-building. So a very important task here is to find a way to accommodate those concerns in an appropriate manner,” Li said.

“On the political side, I think it is very important to address those concerns in relation to other parts of the bigger package. The desired outcome out of COP 23 is that we find appropriate solutions on pre-2020 on the one hand, but also to give a very strong forward-looking message, for example on the Talanoa Dialogue, and also prepare a very solid ground for the Paris Rulebook.”

But if the Northern countries and the global South are at odds over pre-2020 actions, their negotiators have found common ground in another potentially difficult area: agriculture. Agriculture is an important sector both because it contributes as much as one third of total greenhouse gas emission, and because it is of vital importance for food security, economies and livelihoods in most of the Global South

Teresa Anderson, ActionAid said, *“It's been important for the UNFCCC to make progress in a way that could work in the interests of developing countries as well as the interests of the whole planet. There's been debate for a long time about whether this discussion should focus on adaptation or*

whether it should focus on mitigation. It's been very complex, and very tense.”

It's now been agreed that talks under the Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice can be translated into action and implementation, and thus enable the UN system to provide more strategic support for vulnerable countries as well as address highly polluting agricultural systems and practices.

“There is now a concrete opportunity to look into adaptation issues and we can also keep in mind how to bring down dangerous emissions from agriculture. And as civil society, we hope that the discussion will move forward into being about the tools and methodologies and real-life solutions that can help agriculture to become more resilient and less polluting,” said Anderson.

Elsewhere, Climate Action Network has been exploring unconventional options for meeting SDGs and Paris Agreement commitments, said Stephan Singer.

Christoph Bals, Director, Germanwatch, shared news from a court in Hamm, Germany, of a victory for climate action in a landmark legal case – Saúl Luciano Lliuya, a Peruvian farmer, is suing the German utility company RWE for costs to protect his home from a glacier that is now melting due to climate change. Today's decision established the legal basis for companies like this – one of a hundred corporations responsible for the overwhelming majority of greenhouse gas emissions – to be found liable for its contributions to climate disasters that threaten people like Luciano.

“It's a huge breakthrough. It's a precedent, because in more than 50 countries, we have exactly the same clause in the civil law that this court case is built on, the nuisance clause. And this will have effects not only in Germany, but all over the world,” said Bals.