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Vital Surgery Revives Loss and Damage Solidarity

ECO joins you in being glad that Monday is behind us, dear Delegates. And that the text ended up slightly less (or should that be more?) lost and damaged than it started. The reinsertion of institutional arrangements for loss and damage can be the basis for making the mechanism fit for purpose. In addition, a provision for finance for loss and damage is essential if the Paris Agreement is to enable the most vulnerable people to deal with the worst impacts of climate change.

As Typhoon Koppu (Lando) deluges the Philippines, causing flooding and mudslides, knocking out power to nine million people, displacing 16,000 and killing 11 people, it is surely more obvious than ever that a durable climate change agreement must deal with the real and pressing issue of loss and damage, alongside scaling-up action to adapt to climate change.

United In Faith On Climate Action

The voices of many religions are amplifying the call to bring back real ambition to these climate negotiations.

Today, a statement signed by 154 religious and spiritual leaders from 50 countries will be handed over to Christiana Figueres. The Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Brahma Kumari and Sikh leaders are asking governments to reach zero emissions by mid-century, phase-out fossil fuels, commit to building climate resilience, and provide finance and support to poor and vulnerable countries.

Leading by example, these faith leaders have also committed to climate action by pledging to continue raising awareness on climate change and significantly reduce the carbon footprints of their organisations.

Standing united across differences, while combining a scientifically sound mitigation target, finance, support to the most vulnerable, and taking action at home... is all ECO ever asks for.

ECO suggests that Parties take note from these spiritual leaders and continue the negotiations in good faith.

ECO was saddened to hear Switzerland put brackets around the whole loss and damage article—and saddened-yet-not-surprised to hear the Umbrellas pushing for no reference to loss and damage. The EU seems to have exited themselves from the debate. EU: your celebrated “partnership” with vulnerable countries means nothing if you don’t stand with them on this critical issue! [PS: This ECO article is not entirely bracketed. Gruezi!]

Flexibility: Not Always A Good Thing

Flexible mechanisms should not be so pliable that they undermine the already impoverished collective ambition of Parties. The Paris agreement needs to ensure that all Parties are decarbonising their economies and commit to the phase-in of 100% renewable energy by 2050. For this to be possible, any use of carbon markets must be supplemental to strong domestic action. This may seem obvious to most, but let ECO remind delegates that the relevant text on supplementarity is currently bracketed.

It is good to see that certain quality criteria—real emissions reductions, permanence, additionally and supplementarity—have made it into the co-chairs’ new text, in para 34 of the decision. Parties should endorse these, and to make them durable for the lifetime of the agreement, include them as principles for the use of markets in the core legal agreement.

To make sure that market mechanism are used appropriately, ECO believes that the need to achieve a net decrease in emissions needs to be mandatory though, and not left to the whims and fancies of participating Parties. It is also imperative that any use of markets contributes to sustainable development and avoids double counting. The lack of environmental integrity of market mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol have so far created a 11Gt “hot air” loophole. Not putting in place safeguards to avoid double counting could create even more. Surely it is recognise that this would undercut the already inadequate ambition on the table. ECO counts on responsible Parties to set this straight.

The Cure

ECO is eager for the discussions on Workstream 2 to start. Without a strong outcome on pre-2020 ambition, we are likely to lose any chance of keeping global warming to below 2°C, let alone 1.5°C. ECO would like to suggest a few surgical insertions for our patient to grow into a strong and healthy workstream:

- **Recognise the ambition gap and the need to close it:** The efforts under Workstream 2 have to be informed by a clear purpose: the urgency of closing the pre-2020 gap.
- **Acknowledge the need for finance and the role of the Financial Mechanism:** Like the Technology Mechanism, the Financial Mechanism should be given a role. Those environmentally, economically and socially sound opportunities identified under Workstream 2, particularly in renewable energy and energy efficiency, should receive priority support.
- **Task high-level champions with matching potential and support:** Appointing champions can move Workstream 2 from discussion to implementation. They need a clearer mandate to enable coalitions and to match mitigation opportunities with the necessary support.
- **Criteria for initiatives:** The champions and high-level dialogues will catalyse efforts, initiatives and coalitions. Criteria are needed so we can recognise those efforts that respect human rights, social safeguards, and environmental integrity.
- **Review of implementation of initiatives:** Once initiatives are launched, we need to ensure they deliver. Assessing the impact of initiatives should be added as a task for the high-level dialogue.
- **Adaptation:** The status of the paragraphs in italics regarding a technical examination process for adaptation is not clear, but ECO knows that adaptation efforts and support are insufficient and must be enhanced from now until 2020.

ECO doesn't hold a medical degree, but we are sure that to restore the health of the text the brackets must be removed, namely those around the paragraphs on accelerated implementation and high-level co-champions.

Viva la Difference

Many countries have been saying that differentiation needs to be inserted back into the text. And ECO agrees. How would we otherwise be able to reach a dynamic differentiation approach for the Paris agreement and unlock the needed ambition?

During yesterday's exercise, many countries—mostly developing countries—suggested that differentiation needs to be well represented in the co-chairs' text in order to make it a valid starting point for negotiations.

Multiple Parties, rightfully, made it clear that the Paris agreement must be under the Convention. This includes the application of its principles, and that differentiation must be incorporated in the preamble. Additionally, ECO thinks the general mention in Article 2 of common but differentiated responsibilities in the light of national circumstances could be strengthened by referencing different levels of development.

Differentiation must also be addressed in each element of the

Agreement in the context of the relevant issues—specifically, who does what in the mitigation, finance and adaptation sections.

ECO was pleased to see the insertions to the text by Brazil and others that bring CBDR back into the mitigation section. Developed countries should take the lead on mitigation actions, with ambitious contributions from all countries, especially those who are capable.

On INDCs, differentiation would allow different countries to take on different types of commitments according to their responsibility, capability and needs. ECO believes that such a dynamic categorisation would allow countries to progressively raise ambition, particularly with MOI.

ECO has not forgotten about differentiation with respect to finance and adaptation. On finance, ECO urges Parties, including those in a position to do so, to ensure a clear differentiation framework. Matching mainly public climate finance with conditional INDCs is critical to equity and closing the emissions gap. On adaptation support, priorities need to be defined.

Finally, dynamic differentiation should be implemented through the science and equity based review of aggregate and individual assessments as part of the Paris ambition mechanism.

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