



Carlos Lopes cautions African countries to be vigilant at Paris climate negotiations

Paris, France, 8 December 2015 (ClimDev-Africa) - The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Carlos Lopes, today warned that the outcome of the current Paris COP negotiation could potentially be problematic for Africa if it is not based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities, and the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) do not fully recognize historical emissions.

Mr. Lopes was addressing a cross section of African delegations to the talks which are currently seeking a solution to differences that have somehow stalled on the main issues of African concern such as a balanced implementation of adaptation and mitigation; financing of the INDCs. To date, 53 of the 54 African countries have submitted their contributions.

He said that this showed Africa's readiness and said that now that negotiations have entered their political phase, Africa must do everything to ensure that the continent is not shortchanged in the way its interests are reflected in the final agreement.

In this context, the planned contributions determined at the national level may be Africa's best outcome from these negotiations, he said.

Earlier on in the day, the French foreign minister Laurent Fabius had urged African countries to play their part in ensuring that the negotiations progressed faster towards a resolution of the outstanding issues. Mr Xolisa, a member of the African Group of Negotiators, said they would take the time they need to ensure that the final agreement reflects Africa's concerns, as much as possible.

According to Mr. Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, a negotiator of the DRC and member of the Board of Directors of the Green climate Fund, progress in the COP 21 negotiations is painstakingly slow.

"As the African Group, there are issues and principles that are non-negotiable, such as the principle of differentiation between parties. We cannot say, today, that we must all undertake the same level of effort in emissions reduction. This is not possible."

On the question of financing, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, said that Africa has tabled several funding proposals and wants to ensure that this issue remains on the table. But he also called for ambitious amounts, with substantial sums being reserved for adaptation, because the already high costs of climate change to Africa are high.

He further explained that it would be necessary to have an agreement that would enable Africa to take greater account of its adjustment problems, as well as provide for improvements in

planning, in order to make the continent's development more resilient to a changing climate.

On adaptation, the AGN considers that Africa would like all parties to arrive at a common understanding that this is a global concern that requires a global response, rather than a localized issue as some are calling for.

"We believe that there is an overall objective of limiting global temperatures and there is an overall objective on mitigation, and this overall objective on mitigation is linked to a global goal on financing. Similarly, there must be an overall objective on adaptation, which also includes adequate financing", Mr Mpanu Mpanu argued.

On the question of the loss and damage, he underscored the sensitive nature of the issues. Some countries want to be assured that the agreement leaves no route open to legal prosecution at the international level. It is imperative that we reach a common understanding of how this mechanism should be operationalized such that it can take into account the needs of all the parties, explained.

Still on loss and damage, Mr. Adessou Kossivi, the regional coordinator of the West African network of civil society organizations on disaster risk reduction, said that negotiations on loss and damage have gone through an extraordinarily long process, so much so that one has the impression that some parties are working to have the issue simply deleted from the text.

"Today it has been submerged into broader adaptation concerns. Yet, issues of loss and damage are quite significant in so far as some countries bear very extreme impacts of climate change, resulting in high losses and damages to infrastructure and livelihoods", he said.

Issued by:

ECA Communication Service
PO Box 3001
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 551 5826
E-mail: ecainfo@uneca.org ^[1]

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