



COP24 ANALYSIS FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE:

Background: COP24 had one clear goal, to deliver the “Rulebook” of the Paris Agreement (PA). The PA provides the framework for the much needed transformative action, key features of the PA include transparency framework, global stock-take, progress on mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation, finance, technology, loss & damage and compliance. The conference was devoted to completing the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP), a set of decisions meant to operationalize the Paris Agreement to which Brazil, South Africa, India and China underscored that, it should support enhanced ambition without “backsliding”. Delegates arrived in Katowice with fundamental differences, rooted in historical debates about responsibility and leadership when it comes to equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). The African group has always stressed the need to recognize the intrinsic relationship and potential complementarity between climate actions and the right for development of developing countries.

The first week of negotiations which were to be guided and influenced (in my opinion) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, were focused on language, formalizing & finalizing texts with various iterations for the final week of taking decisions. There was a lot of disagreeing within parties on language referring to which parties should provide information especially on issues of *finance transparency*, several parties stated that they do not have a mandate to discuss options other than their preferred option and subsequently agreed to elevate the issue to the heads of delegation level.

The second & last week had a lot of pressure for delegates to reach decisions on finalizing the guidelines for the “Rulebook” just to highlight some of the critical issues, I personally feel are crucial for Africa.

Finance: ⁱThe African group highlighted that full operationalization of Article 9.5 (finance transparency) as an essential trust building component much needed to allow for policies and actions from developing countries that would unlock potentials and allow for enhanced ambition. ⁱⁱFinal decision (*inter alia*) was that, developed countries shall provide financial resources and should continue to take the lead as applicable, including as available, projected levels of public financial resources to be provided to developing countries.

Adaptation Communication: The African group stressed that adaptation communication should be forward looking and the discussion on the elements should be inclusive of a common set of elements and in line with the African position of the full scope NDC's, the group highlighted the importance of ensuring effective linkage between NDC registry and the public registry of adaptation. Final decision (*inter alia*) notes that the purpose of the adaptation communication is to increase the visibility and profile of adaptation and its balance with mitigation, strengthen adaptation action and support for developing countries, provide input to the global stock take and enhance learning and understanding of adaptation needs and actions.

Mitigation: The group highlighted to reach clear options on issues pertaining scope of NDCs mitigation, further action on information to enhance clarity and understanding without leading to diluting the clear flexibility and differentiation in the NDCs between developed and developing countries with clear outcomes with developing countries using the enhanced means of implementation to raise their ambition. Final decision (*inter alia*) reaffirms and underscores that support shall be provided to developing countries for the implementation of Agreement article 4 (mitigation) including to continue to enhance the capacity of developing countries in preparing, communicating and accounting for their NDC's and encourages the relevant operating entities of the Financial Mechanisms and constituted bodies under the Convention serving the Agreement to continue to provide, within their mandates, support for such capacity building.

Global Stock take: For the group operationalization of Equity is crucial, agreeing on the scope with the inclusion of means of implementation as a crucial component of the GST. Final decision (*inter alia*) equity and the best available science will be considered in a party-driven and cross-cutting transparent manner throughout the GST, and with the participation of non-party stakeholders and that all inputs will be fully accessible by parties including online.

Loss & Damage: The African group believes that it is high time to fully implement all the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanism, given the critical importance of addressing Loss and Damage to developing countries. Final decision (*inter alia*) parties were invited to consider developing policies, plans and strategies, and to facilitate coordinated action and the monitoring of progress, in their efforts to avert, minimize and address loss and damage.

Talanoa Dialogue: The group emphasizes TD should address the pre-2020 emissions gap, they call on all developed countries to close this gap including through a facility to finance for emission reductions, international cooperative initiatives, programmes and initiatives, amongst others, so as to avoid shifting the mitigation burden to developing countries post-2020. The COP notes the outcome, inputs and outputs of the Talanoa Dialogue and their potential to generate greater confidence, courage and enhanced ambition and invites parties to consider the outcomes in preparing their NDC's and in their efforts to enhance pre-2020 implementation and ambition.

As a member of the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) at the UNFCCC processes and as an organization advocating locally for gender and climate justice, together with members of the WGC we advocated for rights-based and gender-just implementation guidelines amongst other issues and we were disappointed to learn that during the first week of negotiations, where the focus was on language and formalizing texts for decisions in the 2nd week, that the language on human rights, gender and equity was taken out of the text finalized in SB48.2 in Bangkok. There was a lack of coherence and political will from most states in the integration of human rights into their climate policies.

The outcome on the issue of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform was the establishment of LCIP Facilitative Working Group. The working group amongst other things will organize thematic in-session workshops on enhancing the participation of local communities in addition to indigenous peoples in the platform, we will wait to see the implementation thereof.

We, however welcome the consideration at the final outcome on the implementation of the gender action plan and the reminder to parties, to appoint and provide support for a national gender focal point, and the encouragement to parties and observers to submit information on the implementation of gender action plan.

“The biggest issue that manifested during the later parts of the negotiation is the lack of political support that African negotiators have from their political principals. The fact that there was a shortage of African ministers in the second week. Shows that negotiators and broadly the African position/interests are not being protected a ministerial level when it comes to international platforms. Africa’s interests were later weakened because there were too few African ministers left to take up African interests during the high-level presidency consultation. Therefore, the rulebook is more lenient towards developed country interests than it is on developing country interests. The shifting of the burden has progressed even further to an extent that many of the provisions in the convention and the Paris Agreement (particularly those of differentiation and responsibility) have been weakened.

On the general process, it was important that the negotiations end with an agreed rulebook and the polish presidency tried all means for this outcome to transpire. In some cases, process and normal procedure were overlooked in order to get an outcome, this means that as a result a few incidents of the process not being party driven. A party driven process is important in the international negotiations as it enables the building of trust in the process and in the outcome.

For African civil society, there was a clear lack of direction and articulated position or voice on key issues. The civil society contingency was mostly overshadowed by developed country positions and perspectives. Issues of adaptation, mitigation as well as means of support were less articulated to consider African realities but were in principle very generic when interventions were made. What African civil societies lack is a clear linkage with the African negotiators while at COP. This is different when you consider the closeness of the developed country NGOs and their official negotiators.” – Happy Khambule – Green Peace Africa Political Advisor. South Africa

“In the end, the bruising two weeks at the UN Climate talks in Katowice, Poland, brought a somewhat positive outcome in which all nations showed their commitment as provided in the Katowice Climate Package. The package provides the basis for implementing the Paris Agreement Work Programme as of

2020. However, the moment we landed back home to South Africa, the heat waves and the devastating flash floods (31 December 2018) that wrecked lives and livelihoods brought again the stuck realization that if low carbon policies and measures continue to disproportionately burden the poor and vulnerable on the African continent; or leave out those who thrive and make their living from fossil fuels, they will fail dismally as the effects of a warming climate will continue to cause havoc to human lives and the natural ecosystem” - **Bertha Chiroro - GenderCC Southern Africa- Women For Climate Justice. South Africa**

“What was unique about COP 24 was the creation of the work plan which would materialize the Paris Agreement. This means that some sort of action is required post COP 24. Young people are key drivers of change in society. We are trailblazers, entrepreneurs, and activists; constantly influencing and shaping behaviours in society. It is essential for young people to be part in COP processes, not only to have a say in decisions that impact them and their future, but also to drive climate action. Understanding the process better would allow young people to be key implementors of climate change related projects. For Africa, this is necessary given that in the near future Africa will be the youngest and second most populous continent in the world. For the sake of development and harnessing the African Youth dividend, it is paramount that the youth take lead. We need to lead! There is so much climate action required and needs everyone to create linkages with the issue of climate change and approach the issue from a holistic point of view. We need to do this together!” – Ditebogo Lebea – Youth Policy Committee member – South African Institute of International Affairs.

In Conclusion: as much as most people feel that the **Katowice Climate Package** is a positive outcome, appropriate actions and implementation will attest to that. The issue of responsibility and leadership was still highly evasive, power and dominion still prevails. Most solutions were developed in the Northern context and that makes integration impossible. There was no evidence of financial commitment towards loss & damage which is much needed in communities most affected by climate change impacts. Developed countries are not interested in losses and adaptation in developing countries and they are not recognizing loss of culture in other nations. The divide amongst parties over differentiation and finance was so apparent however the delegates managed to come up with the Katowice Climate Package where parties were able to agree to most elements of the Paris Agreement Work Programme. The package is supposed to bring Paris Agreement to life and not leave anyone behind, however most countries in the global South are left behind in the outcomes especially Africa.

We need real systemic change to tackle the current problems and attain global peace and equity. Urgent, rights-based climate action is critical to ensure that the most vulnerable and future generations do not experience catastrophic climate change. Also connecting local climate efforts with international developments is very critical at this stage as local communities are agents of change.

Way forward: GenderCC Southern Africa based in South Africa will continue with the Climate Change discourse locally, nationally and internationally advocating for rights based and gender just climate change policies, actions and strategies for a higher ambition and building capacity at local level for a bottom up approach and lifting up the local voices. We looking forward to contributing to make submissions on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

ⁱ Statement by the Republic of Gabon on behalf of the African Group at the opening plenary on the COP24.
ⁱⁱ Source of Information: IISD Reporting Services – COP24 Final.