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World Summit on Biodiversity

News from Hyderabad

18 October 2012

We are on the eve of the closing plenary and thus the end of the international summit on biodiversity. Here is a summary of the state of the negotiations on the issues of financing and oceans. While some are optimistic about the outcome of the summit -we actually came a long way - caution should be exercised!

Mobilisation of financial resources

The situation has not changed much. The negotiations are not blocked anymore albeit the issue is far from settled. The groups of negotiators went back to work and it is likely that we will have more information tonight.

At this stage, we can see that the fact that the EU did not arrive in India with a common position and is still struggling to find a consensus among its members, benefits the international deadlock.

However, it seems that progress were made since yesterday night with a proposition on which even the UK is agrees.

One of the difficulties encountered relies on the fact that discussions about funding should be based on an inventory of requirements that states were supposed to achieve between 2010 and 2012. Of the 180 present parties, only 25 of them (including 15 EU- Member States) completed partially or fully this task.

Let's be honest: needs are much higher than what is on the table today.

Most countries (except Canada and Japan among others) do not want to leave this summit with nothing and especially no early commitment on finance.

A minimum agreement could be found. The parties would commit to "preliminary targets," "first targets" but without any numbers and with an increase of the funding for developing countries.

States would therefore decide of a target to be achieved by 2020 without stating for who and for what. They would also agree on the effort and the mobilisation of all resources. Beyond public funding, private investments and innovative resources are needed.

FYI: The EU currently contributes by 53%.

The discussion was brought to another stage and went today to the tigers (badge of Ministers) and dolphins (badges of departmental representatives).

Oceans and protected marine areas

The Working Group Coastal and marine biodiversity has reached an agreement after intensive discussions and negotiations which were very tense until the last minute.

1. Creating the directory and registering AIEB

As regards the negotiations at international level, the tensions focused on the creation of a marine directory of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is here the competent scientific body on the establishment of zoning while the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is responsible for the preparation of regulations that will be applicable. The 11th Conference must approve and register in this directory areas of ecological interest and biological proposed by regional conferences which will were held on the Pacific, North Atlantic and Mediterranean areas (other regional seminars have not yet occurred)

Opponents to the creation of these areas led by China argued that the areas defined are not approved and should not be registered to the official directory. The States are satisfied with the procedure and vocabulary of the compromise which creates and recognises the directory. The system was adopted and lists have been filed. The areas will be adopted in plenary tomorrow at the General Meeting of the Parties. The process of sea law's reform (UNCLOS) and the creation of marine protected areas outside states' marine areas is underway.

The EU also aims to accelerate the agenda and that regulations are presented as early as 2013 proposed regulations instead of 2014 (Rio commitments).

Negotiations at European level

We were on the verge of to leave this summit without any proposal of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas in the European Union: Greece supported by Spain refused any EBSA in the Mediterranean, Norway and Iceland (excluding EU) blocking any registration for the North Atlantic. It's a mixed bag of results as fater Hyderabad only Mediterranean areas will be in the directory. Demarcation and registration of areas in the North Atlantic will be worked on at the COP 12 in 2014 in Korea.

But it took all the energy of France to convince the Greeks and the European Union to reach a compromise on the issue. There are countless different compromises that have been written, torn, rewritten... But France (the current president of the Barcelona Convention) held on to it. The EU was able to reach a common position allowing us to continue to weigh on the international level.

2. Other actions

The CBD, as the competent body here, will work on the : - impact studies on high sea, - fight against noise impacts, - fight against ground waste, - fight against oceans' acidification.

The summit closes in a day and we are still expecting further progress to be made!

Sandrine Bélier

16 October 2012

The negotiations at the 11th World Summit on Biodiversity (COP 11) started on October 8th at Hyderabad in India and will end on Friday 19th October.

One week after the beginning of the talks and despite the fact that government officials arrive today,

discussions have been complex since the opening and came to a standstill as regards some issues.

Mobilisation of financial resources : for the moment the discussions focused solely on international financial flows (with no interest in other sources of funding) and seem to be blocked, even within the EU whose Member states cannot agree on a position common. The UK and Sweden reject numerical targets in an alternative text to the proposal tabled at the Council under the Danish Presidency. France, Germany and Finland support the setting of targets, a timeline to 2015 and a doubling of budget in 2020 (using as a reference the average annual funding of biodiversity 2006-2010). Spain despite its financial position was very positive. Other countries of the European Union remain silent and do not oppose openly the validation of these targets.

The entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol in the hands of the EU?

India announced last week its ratification of the Nagoya protocol. It is the seventh state to do so. The discussions seem to be over, there will be no formal text, no real progress (a roadmap and procedure). The European Union foresees the entry into force of the protocol in 2013 and symbolically announces its participation in MOP 1 in 2014 as a Party, making the bet that by 2014, 50 states will have ratified the Protocol that will de facto enter into force.

Oceans and marine areas

Again, EU Member States cannot reach an agreement and negotiations came to a standstill. Greece, Norway and Iceland formally oppose the establishment of any marine protection areas which may apply to them. France is ambitious and leads the negotiation within the EU. I will get back to you with more information on that point, including the bilateral meeting between France and Greece, which takes place at this moment, but also on REDD +, on the issue of local communities ...

That's the information I can share with you now. I will try to keep you informed with the results of negotiations. It is difficult now to predict the outcome of this conference, but I am hopeful that we will live up to the responsibility that is ours.

Sandrine Bélier

Green MEP present at COP11 in Hyderabad

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