

The G77 and China held a press conference at the Barcelona climate talks on November 3 at 13:00 CET.

Ambassador Lumumba Stanislaus-Kaw Di Aping—head of Sudanese delegation and current chair of the G77 and China chair—gave an overview of the status of negotiations and commented on the Africa Group’s position.

The following are selected excerpts from the press conference transcript.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Lumumba said:

“The life of KP is at risk. Many developed countries are intent on killing KP. Now it has become official—they do want to walk away and discard KP and that’s something that we find fundamentally objectionable.

“Developed countries are walking away from their historical responsibilities as far as their reductions of emissions are concerned, as far as finance is concerned, as far as technology transfer is concerned and as far as their commitment on adaptation and mitigation. We absolutely believe that there is no going back on these issues. We will seek and do our best to take these negotiations to their logical successful conclusions.”

Mr Lumumba later answered questions on the G77 and China’s response to the African Group’s demand that all Kyoto Protocol negotiations be suspended until Annex I country targets are established:

“All members of G77 and China group have been supportive of the statement and position of the African Group...What the G77 have expressed for the last 2 yrs is that we are not moving. And that developed countries are using the process in order to end the task or to not deliver on the task that we were asked to deliver on by the end of 2009.”

“I think what this process has done, what this action of the AG has done is to focus the minds of all of us- if we are going to use our time effectively and efficiently then lets talk about the real issues. The real issues are clear and if the process is not about talking about the serious issues which is not only threatening but is actually killing our people are not on the table then we should refrain from engaging in such a wasteful exercise.”

“We will engage fully in negotiations. Walking in and walking out of negotiations is part of full engagement in the process. [It] focuses the mind of developed countries and the chair of the KP to address as the Chair his responsibilities to shepherd the process in the right direction.”

“The moral, political and legal obligation is on the developed countries to say the time has come for us to put down and talk about the key, the foundational and the fundamentals of the Copenhagen negotiations. Why are they not following the spirit and letter of the Convention and Bali Action Plan to which they are signatories?”

Asked about what developed countries would want to see if the Kyoto Protocol is abandoned, Mr Lumumba said:

“I have said in my earlier statements that developed countries do not want to deliver on their historical responsibility. They do not want an equitable and just deal with regard to atmospheric space. They would want all developing countries to suffer in order for them to enjoy the fruits of public goods. . . They do not accept the inseparability of emission reductions and the rights of developing countries for economic, social development, to poverty reduction and rest of the MDGs.

“What is bad in the protocol? What is it that developed countries see as bad in that protocol? I can tell you- it is the non-delivery and non-commitment of developed countries to do what they should have done. All the efforts that have been put forward and packaged and sold to the media as offers by developed countries are short.”

“The EU has committed to 20% reduction. Is that sufficient to help stabilize and resolve the climate change issue? No.

“Is it equivalent to the damage that Europe alone has caused as far as the climate is concerned? No. Have they offered any adaptation and mitigation help? No.

“What they have offered is 100 billion which is 80% from the market process. If 80% is from the market process it simply means that they are opening markets for their companies and their own interests. 20% is too small a portion in order to address any issue.”

Asked whether “large emitters” like Brazil and China should take on legally binding emission reduction targets, Mr Lumumba replied:

“ . . . either developed countries want to reclassify a few of the developing countries that they describe as advanced developing countries. Or they basically – and this is what I think- they want to reclassify themselves to have the same treatment as developing countries. The fact of the matter is that Developing countries who are so called big emitters are not different from the rest in terms of vulnerability.

“The issue is that they do not want to act, and therefore, the easiest way to do so is to say that I'm not going to do anything unless the others do. Although the others and nobody can convince me today unless I've read history wrong that India, China Brazil participated in the damage to the global environ which has been caused from industrialization- the period from 1850 to about 2000. The participation of the developing countries and their emergence economically started only in the '90s. How can you equate that?”

Answering a question on his expectations of industrialized countries, Mr Lumumba said:

“An equitable and just deal will have to be based on the twin principles – rapid emission reduction and rapid eco development, poverty eradication. That is on a principle basis.

“The second issue with regard to the principals is - is it mitigation centric solution or a balanced solution? Developing countries think that we need to have a balanced solution that takes adaptation to the same degree

of importance as mitigation. A mitigation solution is a solution that is biased towards the interest of developed countries. But it also has another disadvantage- it increases the cost of adaptation by the hour. And who will suffer from that? Developing countries. It means finance and technology transfer has to be addressed rapidly.

“Finally I want to say it has to be publically financed deal. For two simple reasons. The magnitude and nature of this problem cannot be addressed rapidly by using market mechanisms. No investor will commit monies where these is no profit. The second- in view of the historical experience that we have lived through from the 1950s until today and the last experience is the financial crisis. I don’t think it is responsibly moral to say that those same markets the responsibility for the climate change challenge.”

Asked whether a weak deal is better than no deal in the long run, Mr Lumumba replied:

“A weaker deal will lead to our death. If we act on the 25% or 30% that developed countries have offered thus far the number of malnourished in Kenya alone will go from 10 million to more than half of the population. It would mean that all our forests will almost disappear. It would mean that small island states will disappear. It would mean that about 300 million people in the coastal part of India (their) life will be thrown out.... A weaker deal is a deal that (is) at the cost of our existence. It is either a deal that addresses the issue or you can not say that it’s a deal, and that’s why we do believe that here the metaphor that the best is the enemy of the better does not apply.”

Ambassador Amira Daoud Hassan Gornass, the head of the Environmental Affairs department, Sudan read out a G77 and China Statement on the imperative of the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol (KP) in the Copenhagen outcome.

“The UNFCCC is the foundation of the international framework for climate change and the KP is the most imp instrument imbedding the commitments of the Annex I parties. An essential element of the KP is that it is an internatioal and legally binding treaty. It has an aggregate figure which specifies the emission reduction commitments for developed country members of the KP collectively and contains the emission reduction commitments of each of these members. The KP will not expire in 2012. Rather, it has a first commitment period which is ending in 2012. The KP states that there shall be subsequent commitment periods after the first period ends. It is a legal obligation of KP members to enter a 2nd commitment period. In Bali the understanding was that negotiations and the AWG-KP would finalize commitments for the 2nd commitment period – figures for commitment for developed country KP members collectively and for individual countries ad that this would be finalized by the time of the Copenhagen meeting. As 2012 is nearing, Copenhagen must produce new emission reduction targets for a 2nd commitment period figures so that there is no gap or legal vacuum for the KP is a most important component of the Copenhagen outcome. Failure to do so will show failure on the part of Annex I countries. In this context, we are extremely confident that the negotiations in the AWG-KP on emission reduction figures is very slow and there has been no progress even though there are v few negotiating days. There are clear signals that developed countries members of KP do not want to negotiate second commitment period for the KP. The statements of most of the KP developed country members state that they want to abandon KP altogether and instead set up a new agreement altogether.”

Notes:

- (a) Video of the press conference is available via the UNFCCC: http://unfccc2.metafusion.com/kongresse/091102_AWG_Barcelona/templ/ovw_unfccc_big.php?id_kongressmain=95