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RELEASE IN PART
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REVIEW AUTHORITY: David Van
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 Subject: October Bonn Climate Change Negotiations

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met in Bonn, Germany from October 19-23, 2015 met for a meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), which aims to finalize an international climate agreement at the Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting in Paris this December. This was the last official negotiation session before the Paris meeting. Talks got off to a rocky start when the G77 and China (G77) – at the insistence of African countries – initially refused to work off of the ADP co-chairs' proposed negotiating text, unless it was edited to reflect preferred positions. Much of the meeting was spent reinserting and then clarifying and reorganizing Parties' proposals in that revised negotiating text, which we expect to serve as the basis for negotiations in Paris. The resulting 33 page text is overlong and contains much duplication but is not far from where most Parties assumed we would be in the penultimate meeting of the negotiations.

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Posts are asked to watch for a demarche request that will likely be sent next week. Please review the climate change communications package included in 15 STATE 50466 before then. END SUMMARY.

Process Issues Hamper First Few Days

2. (SBU) The session got off to a rocky start when a proposed negotiating text developed and put forward by the ADP co-chairs, Dan Reifsnyder of the U.S. and Ahmed Djoghlaif of Algeria, on October 4th failed to gain acceptance as a basis for negotiations. Instead, the G77 and China – driven by the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) – proposed to provide "surgical" insertions to the draft text to make it acceptable as a basis for further negotiations. In the process that followed, most groups (including our own negotiating bloc, the Umbrella Group) reinserted their preferred positions. The resultant text once again contained the range of views among Parties.

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3. (SBU) For the next several days, Parties then considered the revised text in a half dozen "spin-off" groups covering each of the main elements of the agreement (mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, capacity building, transparency, and the preambular and "purpose" paragraphs of the agreement.) In most spin-off groups, discussions focused on streamlining the text and clarifying options, in order to make the text more negotiable. Very little formal substantive discussion took place, though informal discussions among Parties continued to show signs of convergence on most issues.

4. (SBU) Discussions on climate finance were hampered by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We reaffirmed that we are in no way walking away from our obligation to provide climate finance under the Convention but that, conversely, we are not able to accept new, legally-binding obligations to provide climate finance, quantitative finance targets (individual or collective), or the idea that climate finance will continue to scale up in perpetuity.

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5. (SBU) On loss and damage, a critical issue for island states, Parties continued to explore potential landing zones but made no notable progress. The United States continued to work to build support for our proposal for the Paris COP decision to include a provision mandating the continuation of the Warsaw International Mechanism ("WIM") for Loss and Damage, which was established in 2013 as a body under the current UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The U.S. proposal is intended to address concerns of islands and others that some Parties may try to sunset the WIM when it is under review in 2016. [REDACTED]

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6. (SBU) [REDACTED]

Parties worked well together to streamline and clarify the parts of the negotiating texts covering mitigation, transparency, capacity building and technology, with Brazil, South Africa and China playing especially constructive roles. That said, each of those sections now contains options for bifurcated responsibilities between developed and developing countries, inserted by the AGN and the "Like Minded Developing Country" (LMDC) group, which includes China, India and Saudi Arabia, among others. It is well known that those options are non-starters for the United States.

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Output of the Session

7. (SBU) The output of the session was a 33 page draft agreement text and 22 page draft decision text, with relatively clear options but all Parties' positions - including many highly objectionable to the U.S. - still included. While not ideal, this situation is also not surprising, as climate negotiators tend not to concede positions of significance until the COP.

8. (SBU) We can expect the draft texts coming out of this meeting to be used as a basis for negotiations in the first days of Paris. While they are considerably longer than the draft text put forward by the co-chairs at the beginning of the session, they are also substantially shorter than the approximately 80 page text Parties have worked on until now, and well over a hundred pages shorter than the texts Parties had before them going into the Copenhagen Climate Talks in 2009.

Enhancing pre-2020 Ambition

9. (SBU) On enhancing mitigation ambition before 2020 - the period before the new agreement is to take effect - Parties continued to discuss elements for a decision in Paris. The United States and other developed countries supported the existing mandate of Workstream 2 to focus on mitigation ambition, including furthering the technical examination process to explore mitigation opportunities, while the G-77, and particularly LMDCs, supported broadening Workstream 2 to include work on financial support, technology, and adaptation. Parties agreed to use the draft text produced in Bonn as the basis for negotiations in Paris.

Emergence of G77 as a Unified Bloc

10. (SBU) [REDACTED]

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B1**Process through Paris**

12. (SBU) The COP Presidency is hosting a pre-COP meeting to bring together ministers from 90 countries in Paris from November 8-10. The pre-COP aims to discuss key political issues in the Paris agreement prior to negotiations begin on November 30, 2015. Further, the Turkish Presidency will host the G20 Leaders' Summit from November 15 – 16. The G20 aims to conclude the Summit with practical outcomes on priority areas, including climate change and climate finance.

Status of INDC Submissions

13. (U) As of October 28, 2015, 127 countries and the EU (representing its 28 member States) have formally submitted INDCs to the UNFCCC. Most members of the Major Economies Forum have submitted, including the United States, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Mexico, and Australia, as have a diverse group of countries from Central and South America, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Middle East. INDCs on the table account for more than 85% of all global greenhouse gas emissions. We expect the remaining countries, particularly the oil-based economies in OPEC, to come forward with INDCs before Paris.

If Needed Talking Points (Note: Demarche request likely to be sent next week)

- While the recent climate talks in Bonn made less progress than we had hoped they would, we think the outcome enables us to maintain strong momentum for success in Paris.
- The draft agreement and decision texts coming out of the session are a step forward from previous versions, as they are significantly shorter and more negotiable.
- While we continue to be concerned with the pace of progress, we are encouraged that a number of informal conversations in Bonn helped us move closer to landing zones, even if that progress is not yet reflected in the texts.
- In the weeks before Paris, we will continue to engage with Parties to develop landing zones and to continue to advocate for an ambitious and durable Agreement that is applicable to all and reflective of the spectrum of Parties' circumstances and capabilities.

Signature: Kerry

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