

Cancun consensus triumphs in Durban

Amid the uncertainty toward a global agreement to reduce emissions, the Cancun consensus on addressing global climate challenges has triumphed, with countries having agreed on the operational bodies that will be the focal points of climate change projects.

The 194 countries involved in the 17th climate conference in Durban have agreed to start pledges to contribute initial funds, to be ready next year, to help developing countries launch mitigation and adaptation efforts. A Standing Committee consisting of 20 member states is to oversee climate finance.

Four countries – Denmark, Germany, Great Britain and South Korea – have expressed commitment to establish the climate fund.

Despite heated debates on market mechanisms, the conference has also established a draft on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) as a mitigation mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convention.

Supporting the creation of a carbon market and carbon responsibility offsets, Indonesia sent letters to the chair of the Ad-hoc Working Group for the Long-term Cooperative Action to ensure that the mechanism was included in the draft.

“On forests, countries broke through a long-standing stalemate in agreeing that both markets and non-market resources can be used to finance developing countries’ efforts on REDD+ activities,” said Duncan Marsh, international climate policy director at The Nature Conservancy.

The conference has also supported the establishment of the Adaptation Committee, composed of 16 members, which will report to the conference on its efforts to improve the coordination of climate adaptation actions worldwide. The developing countries would allow developed countries to assess and assist in reducing their vulnerability.

Adaptation efforts, in which countries helping citizens to brace themselves against the impacts of climate change, received larger interest from donor countries this year.

The plea from small island states that their countries’ existence was threatened by the impacts of climate change moved other states to increase efforts rather than just focusing talks on mitigation or emission reduction efforts.

The climate financing body is regulated to provide balanced allocations of resources for both adaptation and mitigation projects.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s special envoy for climate change, Rachmat Witoelar, said that he was satisfied with the outcomes of Durban.

“The extension of two days in the conference reached the best compromise to accommodate requests of many countries,” he said.

Climate financing and the operation of REDD have been the major negotiation forums that Indonesia engaged in during the two-week climate talks.