United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

Mitigation and Transparency

This transition to action is "a remarkable opportunity to carve out a new reality because we have a very good blueprint in the Paris Agreement, but we have to make it real".

Christiana Figueres

Turning the Paris Agreement into Reality

Post-Paris work on mitigation

Interim nationally determined contribution registry introduced to Parties at the Bonn Climate Change Conference

The newly launched interim public registry showcasing countries' formal climate action plans under the Paris Agreement, known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), was presented to Parties at a side event on 18 May 2016 at the Bonn Climate Change Conference.

The NDC registry is the principal instrument for formally recording action taken by countries under the Paris Agreement. The launch of the interim NDC registry on 6 May is a key milestone in the implementation of the agreement.

At the side event, representatives of the secretariat, which maintains the registry, explained the interim NDC registry's functions and invited feedback on its design

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and features. The secretariat informed participants that the interim NDC registry is intended to provide a temporary platform through which Parties can upload their first NDCs in accordance with the provision of the Paris Agreement pending an agreement among the Parties on its final design, and modalities and procedures.

The interim registry is intended to be dynamic allowing Parties the flexibility to update or revise their documents at any time following submission of their NDCs. Another of the interim registry's key features is its transparency, as it will display all documents submitted by Parties.

During a question and answer session, the audience expressed its appreciation for the interim registry's current design, which was seen as providing a solid basis for the final product. One participant suggested an improvement to the search function of the interim registry, which was duly noted by the secretariat.

To date, 17 Parties have submitted NDCs to the interim NDC registry, a positive sign of post-Paris momentum.

On 2 May, the secretariat also updated and published the synthesis report on the aggregated effect of intended nationally determined contributions, which showed the ambition levels of all Parties.

The NDC interim public registry can be accessed here.

The updated synthesis report and all other related documents can be found here.

Nationally determined contributions - from climate plans to climate action: high-level views at the Bonn Climate Change Conference

On 17 May, a high-level event at the Bonn Climate Change Conference focused on how to move forward with the implementation of the Parties' NDCs under the Paris Agreement.

Introducing the event, Mr. Don Cooper, Coordinator of the Mitigation, Data and Analysis subprogramme, said that the movement of Parties into an era of implementation rather than negotiation marks the crossing of an important bridge. "Adopting the Paris Agreement and communicating NDCs is just the first step," he said. "Now everyone needs to move towards this magical moment of implementation."

The high-level panel included Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary; Ms. Laurence Tubiana, Ambassador of France; Mr. Aziz Mekouar, Ambassador of Morocco; and Ms. Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Director General at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Presentations by the high-level panel were followed by a session on linking finance to reaching the objectives of NDCs, and a further session on readiness and support, concluding with a question and answer session.

Nationally determined contributions - from plans to reality

In the high-level session, Ms. Hoven said that with the adoption in 2015 of both the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, "implementing the NDCs, coming from the negotiations to action, can be a true driver for sustainable development on the ground".

Ms. Figueres referred to this transition to action as "a remarkable opportunity to carve out a new reality because we have a very good blueprint in the Paris Agreement, but we have to make it real".

Ms. Tubiana stressed the need to ensure that all Parties have access to the strategies, policies and investment they need to transform their economies. "We have to integrate shorter term strategies into longer term vision," she said.

"The generous contribution each country has made and will make in preparing NDCs," said Mr. Mekouar, "is how we demonstrate trust in the process and in our common ability to meet the climate change challenges head on."

Finance for achieving nationally determined contribution objectives

A session linking finance to NDC objectives included panelists from the World Bank, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility.

Encouragingly, there has been an 18 per cent increase in global financial flows for climate change actions since 2014, but financing NDCs needs to be connected to such flows. For this reason, panelists agreed on the importance of translating NDCs into concrete programmes and project pipelines, enabling easier access to both the increased flows and pools of untapped capital.

The panelists considered the development of new funding models that provide both long-term funding and simplified access to climate finance as a key enabler for the implementation of NDCs

The participants acknowledged the important role of the private sector in financing and implementation, as well as its risk awareness. In order to attract more private sector investment, panelists saw the need for governments to create concrete frameworks for the transformation of the

sectors listed in their NDCs, ensuring necessary stability and predictability with regard to policy development for these sectors.

There should be long-term political support for NDCs in order to enable their full implementation over time. South–South cooperation can also play a role in securing financing for the implementation of NDCs.

Readiness and implementation support

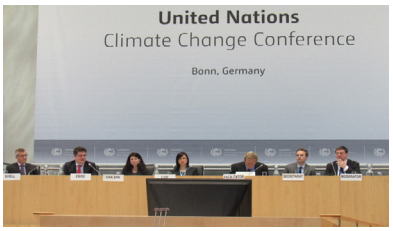
A final session identified three key capacity-building needs for the implementation of NDCs:

1. The integration of climate change and development planning, where coherent policy frameworks are needed;
2. Transforming NDCs into implementable programmes and project pipelines;
3. Establishment of national measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) systems.

Technical expert meetings

Decision 1/CP.21 called for strengthening of the existing technical examination of opportunities with high mitigation potential and associated adaptation, health and sustainable development co-benefits in the pre-2020 period. The decision requested the secretariat to organize the technical examination process, including by organizing regular technical expert meetings(TEMs) focusing on specific policies, practices and actions representing best practices with the potential for scalability and replicability.

During the forty-fourth sessions of the subsidiary bodies, two TEMs were held: one on the "Social and economic value of carbon", and another on "Efficient public transport and energy efficiency of vehicles". The TEM on the social and economic value of carbon focused on the benefits of early mitigation actions, which can be translated into a monetary value of potential damages avoided. This monetary value can serve as a reference level for stakeholders, such as Parties and the private sector, by which to evaluate the development, implementation and effectiveness of their early mitigation actions. The TEM on efficient public transport and energy efficiency of vehicles focused on low-carbon transport that enables individual mobility and access for all citizens. In particular, transport solutions that include substantial sustainable development co-benefits were highlighted and discussed.



The evolving transparency framework under the Paris Agreement

Update on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement on transparency

The framework for the transparency of action and support under the Paris Agreement, enshrined in Article 13, aims to build mutual trust and confidence, and promote the effective implementation of climate action, including means of implementation such as finance, technology transfer and capacity-building. The transparency framework will have a built-in flexibility which takes into account Parties' different capacities and builds upon collective experience under the Convention. The framework will also provide a clear understanding of the climate change action of individual Parties, including clarity and tracking of progress towards achieving Parties' NDCs and adaptation actions as well as support provided and received. The framework will also provide input to the periodic global stocktake of the implementation of the Paris Agreement in order to assess collective progress.

The transparency framework consists of three broad areas: the reporting of information, a technical review of the reported information, and a facilitative multilateral consideration of progress made on efforts under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement and its implementation of Article 9 and achievement of its nationally determined contribution. All of these will require operational details in the form of modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs).

The transparency framework under the Paris Agreement requires mandatory participation of all Parties. At the same time, it also accords flexibility to developing country Parties in order to accommodate their differing capacities. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the need to build on experience from the existing MRV arrangements under the Convention.

What happened in the negotiations under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement at its first session?

As the Parties met for the first time after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the meeting offered the opportunity for an initial exchange of views, to discuss and agree on an approach for the smooth launching of the in-depth work at the next session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris

The Evolving Transparency Framework (cont'd.)

"The first session of APA saw significant progress on the provision of support to developing countries to assist them in participating and implementing the transparency framework"

Agreement (APA).

All Parties acknowledged the transparency framework as a core part of the Paris Agreement and stressed the importance of putting in place robust MPGs covering mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation (finance, technology transfer and capacity-building). Over the course of the deliberations, Parties touched upon some of the key principles enshrined in the Paris Agreement on the transparency of action and support, including building the enhanced transparency framework on the existing MRV arrangements under the Convention, providing flexibility to the developing countries that need it and key elements of the transparency framework. All of these important principles will need further deliberation in order to operationalize them taking into account the differing capacities of Parties and thereby promote universal participation in the transparency framework. The first session of the APA also saw significant progress on the provision of support to developing countries in order to assist them in participating in and implementing the transparency framework. The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency established in Paris, as a part of the outcome on transparency of action and support, is about to come into operation. The initiative also received significant contributions from some of the developed countries.

Demonstrating the urgency of initiating the technical work as soon as possible, Parties agreed to do some work between then and the next session of the APA. This work entails submitting concrete views on the MPGs for the transparency framework for action and support, which will be compiled and will feed into the deliberations at the next session of the APA.

Notes from the first round of the international consultation and analysis process

Developing country emission reduction actions: first facilitative sharing of views

A first-of-its-kind workshop was held on 20 and 21 May at the Bonn Climate Change Conference, giving developing countries the opportunity to showcase their actions on reducing emissions, highlight the associated challenges and gaps, and provide an overview of international support received and required.

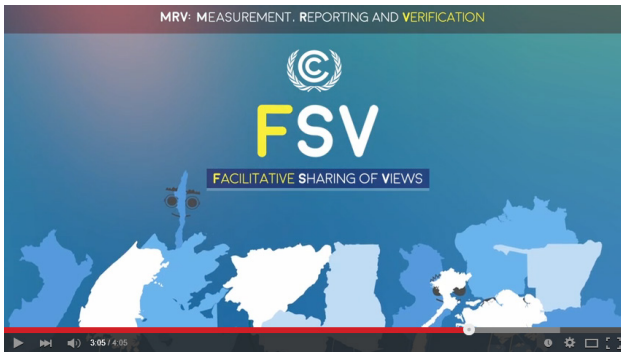
Known as a facilitative sharing of views (FSV), it forms part of the international consultation and analysis (ICA) process for developing countries, the objective of which is to increase the transparency of mitigation actions and their effects in a manner that is non-intrusive, non-punitive and respectful of national sovereignty.

The launch of the facilitative sharing of views workshop went very smoothly, following the true spirit and principles of the ICA process, with a facilitative and interactive exchange among Parties. While opening of the workshop, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), Mr. Tomasz Chruszczow, highlighted the relevance of this first ever FSV workshop and congratulated the presenting Parties for being the first to complete the ICA cycle.

Representatives of a total of 13 developing country Parties gave presentations, each of which was followed by a question and answer session.

The presenting Parties were: Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Ghana, Namibia, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and Viet Nam. In their presentations, most countries expressed the need for continued international support in order to help them to improve their national systems for MRV among others.

The developing country Parties answered the questions posed by different Parties in a transparent manner, including answers to written questions received in advance. The effort to provide answers (either in writing or during the presentation) to those written questions was greatly appreciated by those Parties who submitted them. The questions were mostly forward looking in the sense that they looked for further clarity on experiences, lessons learned and best practices as well as on challenges and constraints encountered.



Outreach on measurement, reporting and verification for developing countries

During the forty-fourth sessions of the subsidiary bodies, Mitigation Data and Analysis (MDA) subprogramme organized two events to highlight the progress made on the implementation of the MRV arrangements for developing countries, one on the ICA process and another on the biennial update reports (BURs) submitted by Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties).

The primary objective of these events was to provide a forum where non-Annex I Parties could share their experiences and lessons learned from the ICA cycle and the preparation of their BURs. Key agencies that provided support to Parties in order to meet their reporting obligations also participated in the second workshop.

The ICA side event provided an update on the ICA process in particular, the successful completion of the historic FSV workshop. Two of the thirteen Parties that participated in the FSV, Uruguay and Viet Nam, recalled their positive experiences from their participation as well as their needs, lessons learned and key challenges. These included: (1) the need for support for improving national systems for MRV; (2) the benefit of retaining technical teams to be involved in the preparation of BURs and the technical analysis process as key lessons learned; and (3) key challenges such as insufficient institutional coordination and the lack of clarity in the BUR reporting guidelines.

In the side event on the BURs, the secretariat provided an update on the technical analysis (TA) of the BURs. The secretariat indicated that three rounds of TA were completed in 2015, covering 14 BURs submitted by non-Annex I Parties, 13 of which participated in the FSV workshop. The fourth round of TA was held from 29 February to 4 March 2016 and three additional rounds are scheduled for June, September and December 2016.

The secretariat informed the audience about the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) training programme and highlighted the key achievement of the three rounds of training: 156 qualified experts being made eligible to conduct the technical analysis of BURs as part of a team of technical experts. During the BUR side event, three countries at varying stages of the existing MRV arrangements under the Convention, shared information on either the content of their BURs or on the challenges and lessons learned from the BUR process. Peru and Ghana, having completed the full cycle of the ICA process, underscored their positive experiences during the FSV, but also highlighted some key challenges in the process of preparing their BURs. These included the lack of institutional arrangements to prepare BURs and the lack of access to good quality data using a dedicated data sharing platform for Peru and Ghana, respectively. Costa Rica, which recently underwent the TA, shared its impressions on the key challenges, including meeting the frequency of reporting for BURs and its lack of capacity to transition from the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (2006 IPCC Guidelines).

One key lesson learned is the opportunity to synchronize and improve coherence among activities associated with the preparation of BURs, national communications and NDCs. Key agencies that provide support to Parties in meeting their reporting obligations, the Global Environment Facility, the Global Support Programme for Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports by non-Annex I Parties and the UNEP DTU Partnership, also provided detailed information on the technical and financial support available for reporting.

Technical support from the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

The CGE held its side event entitled "CGE technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of their national communications and biennial update reports" on 23 May 2016 during the forty-fourth sessions of the subsidiary bodies.

The event was moderated by the CGE Chair, Mr. Stephen King'uyu. The SBI Chair opened the meeting highlighting that the key role of the CGE is to provide technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties so as to improve the process of the preparation of national communications and biennial update reports. Ms. Sandee Recabar, the representative of the Philippines, presented her country's experience in the preparation of its national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory system. She also highlighted how GHG inventory data collection has been integrated into the Philippines' national process. Mr. Thapelo Letete, the representative of South Africa, spoke about the challenges and lessons learned in the preparation of South Africa's national communications. He also indicated that the next national communication and biennial update report were under way. Ms. Bhava Dhungana from the Non-Annex I Support subprogramme of the secretariat, presented the CGE training materials that are available online, CGE e-learning courses and the new CGE e-Network site.

The question and answer session allowed the audience to gain further information from the speakers regarding their experience in accessing funding, and how to integrate GHG inventory data into their national process.

Reporting and review: outcomes from the forty-fourth sessions of the subsidiary bodies

The greenhouse gas data Interface

The greenhouse gas data Interface is an online database providing access to a vast multitude of GHG data from both Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) and non-Annex I Parties, under both the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. This powerful data display and outreach tool has proved to be used in an extensive manner for a wide range of user purposes, including GHG reviews. Following the adoption, through decision 24/CP.19, of the "Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual greenhouse gas inventories" (based on 2006 IPCC Guidelines), the UNFCCC secretariat received a mandate from the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions, to implement the necessary changes to the greenhouse gas data interface.

This upgrade represents a major project, with many technical challenges, including its interface with the UNFCCC data warehouse as well as the CRF Reporter, both currently being redesigned. Prior to SBSTA 44, on 13 May 2016, in response to the mandate received from SBSTA 38 and SBSTA 39, the secretariat released two modules of the greenhouse gas data interface (Time series – Annex I and Global map – Annex I) containing data reported by Annex I Parties.

At SBSTA 44, while Parties recognized that insufficient financial resources were made available in order to complete the currently mandated work, they could not reach an agreement on the scope and timing of the further mandate on the implementation of changes to include the data from non-Annex Parties voluntarily reported using the 2006 IPCC Guidelines. The discussions, anticipated to be rather technical, took on a more political dimension owing to linkages with the common modalities and reporting requirements under the transparency framework stemming from the Paris Agreement that are to be discussed under the APA. The greenhouse data interface agenda item will be considered again at the next session of the SBSTA.

National communications reporting guidelines

The work on the revision of the "Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part II: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on national communications" (UNFCCC reporting guidelines on NCs) under the SBI achieved remarkable progress during SBI 44.

A pre-sessional workshop on the revision of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines on NCs was held on 13 and 14 May 2016, aiming to advance the discussion on the revision of the above-mentioned guidelines in order to feed into the discussion at SBI 44. The workshop was attended by 57 participants from 46 Parties, including 23 non-Annex I Parties. The discussions during the pre-sessional workshop were marked by a spirit of constructive cooperation among the participants and saw focused work on substantive elements leading to significant progress in two days.

The draft guidelines were agreed, with the exception of one paragraph related to the provision of translation of national communications. The draft UNFCCC reporting guidelines on NCs are aligned with those on biennial reports and GHG inventories that facilitate the reporting of the information and provide for transparency.

Technical assessments of proposed REDD-plus reference levels

The Conference of the Parties, at its nineteenth session, adopted the guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from developing country Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels. The annual technical assessment process spans 43 weeks and includes a one-week centralized assessment session in Bonn. The technical assessment process began in 2014, when only one submission of a proposed reference level was received from Brazil. In 2015, five countries submitted their proposed reference levels: Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Malaysia and Mexico. The technical assessment reports of these countries can be found here.

> "So far in 2016, nine developing countries have submitted their forest reference levels for technical assessment"

The assessment process offers a facilitative, non-intrusive, technical exchange between developing country Parties and assessment teams comprising land use, land-use change and forestry experts on the construction of reference levels with the aim of supporting the capacities of submitting developing country Parties to improve their future submissions. So far in 2016, nine developing countries have submitted their forest reference levels for technical assessment namely: Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Paraguay, Peru, Viet Nam and Zambia. The process is ongoing and is expected to be completed by the end of November 2016.