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MESSAGE TO PARTIES

Information on the submission of proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels by developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis, when implementing the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, and on the technical assessments of these submitted reference levels in 2016 and 2017

Parties will recall that the COP, in its decision 12/CP.17,¹ paragraph 13, invited developing country Parties, on a voluntary basis and when deemed appropriate, to submit proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels, in accordance with decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 71(b), when undertaking the activities referred to in paragraph 70 of that same decision. Parties will also recall that the COP, in its decision 13/CP.19, adopted the guidelines and procedures for the technical assessment of submissions from Parties on proposed forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels. In accordance with decision 13/CP.19, paragraphs 1 and 2, each submission shall be subject to a technical assessment and such proposed reference levels may be technically assessed in the context of results-based payments.

The secretariat, in response to the mandate set out in decision 13/CP.19, is pleased to inform Parties of the proposed **timing for the technical assessments** to be conducted in **2016** and **2017**.² This information is being provided to facilitate the planning for submission of reference levels by developing country Parties and to ensure the efficient and effective organization of the technical assessment sessions by the secretariat in accordance with the procedures and time frames established in the annex of that decision.

Distribution: This notification is being sent to all Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is addressed to their national focal points for climate change.

¹ All decisions mentioned in this message are available at <<http://unfccc.int/6917>>.

² Dates for 2017 are indicative and the exact dates may still change in case of clashes with events which are difficult to envisage at this point of time.



To that end, and particularly to ensure the successful organization of the technical assessment sessions, the secretariat will be taking several actions, including the following:

1. Organize assessment sessions once a year in Bonn, as mandated by paragraph 10 of the annex to decision 13/CP.19. In accordance with the same paragraph, submissions received no later than 10 weeks ahead of a session will be assessed at that session. Parties should note that submissions received beyond the 10 weeks ahead of a session will be scheduled for assessment the following year;
2. Coordinate the technical assessment process;
3. Ensure a balanced representation of LULUCF experts from developing countries and developed countries, whereby each submission shall be assessed by two LULUCF experts selected from the UNFCCC roster of experts, one from a developed country and one from a developing country.

In line with point 1 above, the secretariat will need to receive submissions **at least ten (10) weeks** before the start of the assessment session to ensure adequate and effective logistical preparation and organization of the technical assessment (e.g. identifying, inviting and confirming relevant experts). Parties should also note that all relevant information pertaining to the submission needs to be forwarded to the assessment team of LULUCF experts **at least eight (8) weeks** before the start of the assessment session, allowing the participating LULUCF experts sufficient time to adequately prepare for the one week centralized assessment session in Bonn. The technical assessment process itself shall require up to **forty-two (42) weeks** (including interaction time between the assessment team and Party concerned, response time by Party and the time for preparation of draft and final reports).

After careful consideration of several factors that have implications for the timing of the technical assessments, such as the timing of all technical review processes being organized under the Convention and Kyoto Protocol in any given year, the timing of UNFCCC negotiation sessions, the availability of active LULUCF experts during the year and the need for on-going fund raising to support the organization of the technical assessments, the secretariat has identified the most feasible dates for the assessment sessions in 2016 and 2017 and the corresponding submission deadlines for these sessions. The detailed steps and time frames of each technical assessment session in 2016 and 2017 are presented in the annex to this message. Submissions of forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels should be sent by the UNFCCC national focal point to the secretariat at <secretariat@unfccc.int>.

In addition to the guidance contained in decision 13/CP.19 on the organization of technical assessments, the COP invited Parties, in particular developing country Parties, and, as appropriate, intergovernmental organizations to nominate technical experts with the relevant qualifications to the UNFCCC roster of experts. Each Party should also confirm to the secretariat the names of their active LULUCF experts on the roster of experts and which experts will be able to participate in the technical assessment of the submitted reference levels. Parties are invited to refer to the roster of experts available at: <<http://unfccc.int/534>> to nominate new experts and/or update the information on already nominated experts.



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The COP, by decision 13/CP.19, paragraph 6, further invited Parties, in particular developed country Parties, and relevant international organizations to support capacity-building in relation to the development and assessment of reference levels.

The secretariat requests the kind cooperation of Parties in meeting the time frames of the planned technical assessment sessions for 2016 and 2017 as noted above and in the annex to this message with a view to facilitating the organization and coordination of the technical assessments of submitted forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and to ensuring successful outcomes.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed by)

Christiana Figueres

Annex**Overview table on the indicative time frames of the technical assessment of reference levels in 2016 and 2017³**

	Technical assessment 2016	Technical assessment 2017
Early notice to the secretariat	Latest by 2 November 2015	Latest by 31 October 2016
Deadline for reference level submission (no later than 10 weeks before the assessment session)	Latest by 4 January 2016	Latest by 2 January 2017
Information forwarded to assessment team (8 weeks before the assessment session)	Latest by 18 January 2016	Latest by 16 January 2017
Assessment session in Bonn (1 week)	14–19 March 2016	13–18 March 2017
Seeking additional clarifications from the Party (up to 1 week)	21–28 March 2016	20–27 March 2017
Party to provide clarifications (8 weeks)	29 March–23 May 2016	27 March–22 May 2017
4 weeks for assessment team to consider modified reference level (applicable in the case that the Party modifies its submitted reference level)	23 May–20 June 2016	22 May–19 June 2017
Assessment team to prepare draft report	Latest by 11 July 2016	Latest by 10 July 2017
Party to respond to draft report (12 weeks)	Latest by 3 October 2016	Latest by 2 October 2017
Assessment team to prepare final report within four weeks following the Party's response	Latest by 31 October 2016	Latest by 30 October 2017
Final report published and technical assessment completed	11 November 2016	10 November 2017

* For planning purposes, dates indicate the maximum time frames required in accordance with decision 13/CP.19.

³ Dates for 2017 are indicative and the exact dates may still change in case of clashes with events which are difficult to envisage at this point of time.