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MESSAGE TO PARTIES

Multilateral assessment at SBI 43 in Paris, France

On behalf of the Executive Secretary, I wish to draw the attention of all Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to the third working group session of multilateral assessment (MA), that will be convened during the forty-third session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) in Paris in 2015. The third working group session of MA will be conducted for two Parties (Belarus and Kazakhstan).¹ This will complete the MA of all developed country Parties under the first round of the international assessment and review (IAR) process.

The MA process is a part of the IAR process for developed country Parties that was established through decisions 1/CP.16 and 2/CP.17. The IAR process comprises two steps:

- 1) A technical review of the national reports of each developed country Party;
- 2) MA of the progress towards achieving the economy-wide emission reduction targets by developed country Parties in a working group session under the SBI.

During the SBI MA working group session, each of the Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) will be multilaterally assessed, with the participation of all Parties to the Convention.

As the MA process involves an important preparatory stage, which includes a question and answer process between Parties under MA and all other Parties participating in the process, actions and inputs from all Parties are needed in the next few months in the lead up to the MA session at SBI 43. For this purpose, the annex to this message contains a list of activities and inputs called for in accordance with decision 2/CP.17 in order to prepare for the MA session in Paris.

The annex also contains details of the MA working group session under the SBI 43 in Paris, including information on the format and duration of the session as well as other organizational issues. This follows the established practice and procedures from the previous working group sessions of MA, which were consulted with Parties by the Chair of the SBI and were endorsed by Parties.

Distribution: To Parties and observer States through their national focal points for climate change and diplomatic missions accredited to the Federal Republic of Germany.

¹ Further information on the organization and the exact dates of this session will be posted on the SBI 43 web page @ <www.unfccc.int/9089>.



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It is hoped that this information will assist Parties in their preparation for, and participation in, the MA process at SBI 43 in Paris. Questions or requests for clarification can be addressed to the secretariat <secretariat@unfccc.int>.

The MA process constitutes an important step in the evolution of the UNFCCC process. The secretariat is committed to supporting Parties as they implement their decisions to strengthen transparency under the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed by)

Richard Kinley
Deputy Executive Secretary



Annex

Overview of the issues related to the preparation and conduct of multilateral assessment in Paris

I. Background of and mandate for multilateral assessment under international assessment and review

1. **International assessment and review (IAR)** is a process under the Subsidiary Body of Implementation (SBI) that aims to promote the comparability of efforts among all developed countries with regard to their quantified economy-wide emission limitation and reduction targets. Modalities and procedures of IAR are elaborated in annex II to decision 2/CP.17 at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=4>>.
2. The IAR process comprises:
 - (i) A **technical review** of biennial reports;
 - (ii) A **multilateral assessment (MA)** of the progress made by developed country Parties in implementation towards the achievement of emission reductions and removals related to their quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets.
3. The MA entails:
 - (i) A **question and answer (Q&A)** process before the MA working group session under the SBI – any Party may submit written questions to the Parties being assessed in advance of the MA, and the Parties being assessed endeavour to respond to those questions within two months;
 - (ii) An **assessment** of the Parties concerned with the participation of all Parties during the MA working group session under the SBI.
4. The **outputs** of the MA process for each Party included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Party) form the basis of a Party record prepared by the secretariat including:
 - (i) In-depth review reports;
 - (ii) The summary report of the SBI;
 - (iii) The compilation of Q&As;
 - (iv) Any observations by the Party under review that are submitted **within 2 months** of the MA working group session.
5. Based on the Party record, the SBI will forward **conclusions** to relevant bodies under the Convention as appropriate.

II. Parties under multilateral assessment in Paris

6. Following the technical reviews of the sixth national communications and first biennial reports of Belarus and Kazakhstan in April 2015 and the publication of their respective review reports, the MA working group session (WGS) for these two Parties will be conducted in Paris at SBI



43. The exact date of this WGS will be posted on the SBI 43 web page as the planning for the Paris Conference develops.

7. It should be noted that Kazakhstan is a Party not included in Annex I to the Convention. However, it notified the depositary of its intent to be bound by Article 4, paragraphs 2(a) and (b), of the Convention. At COP12, the COP requested Kazakhstan to submit its national communication and annual greenhouse gas inventories in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 2 (b), and Article 12 of the Convention, using relevant UNFCCC guidelines, i.e. guidelines for Annex I Parties (FCCC/CP/2006/5, paragraph 96). This request was reiterated at COP14 (FCCC/CP/2008/7, paragraph 68). Also, Kazakhstan submitted its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target to the secretariat on 27 January 2010 (FCCC/SB/2011/INF.1/Rev.1, paragraph 15). The first biennial report of Kazakhstan contains information pertaining to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target and is subject to the international assessment and review process as defined in decisions 1/CP.16 and 2/CP.17.

III. The question and answer process before multilateral assessment in Paris

8. The MA will be conducted on the basis of the biennial report, the national greenhouse gas inventory (including the national inventory report), the national communication and their respective review reports, as well as supplementary information on the achievement of the Party's quantified economy-wide emission reduction target provided by the Annex I Party.
9. Prior to WGS of the SBI in Paris, in accordance with decision 2/CP.17, there will be a question and answer period during which any Party can submit questions to the Parties that will be multilaterally assessed during WGS. The question and answer period is approximately **three months** prior to WGS, during which two months are allocated for the Parties undergoing multilateral assessment to answer questions.
10. To facilitate the question and answer process, the secretariat developed a web portal, the MA Portal, which can be accessed on the UNFCCC website at <<http://process.unfccc.int/sites/ma>>. Since the launch of the web portal in 2014, the secretariat has been in contact with all Parties (via National Focal Points) requesting that they nominate relevant persons to access to the portal on their behalf. To enable Parties to access the MA Portal, log-in credentials are required. These log-in credentials were emailed to users in August 2014.
11. For the third WGS of MA at SBI 43 in Paris, the timeline for the question and answer process is outlined in table 1 below. The working language for the question and answer process will be English. Questions or requests for clarification can be addressed to the secretariat using the email address: <MA-portal@unfccc.int>.



Table 1
Timeline of the question and answer period

Timeline	Action	Note
1 to 30 September 2015	<p>Any Party can submit questions for the two Parties being assessed.</p> <p>Questions should fall into the following categories (annex II to decision 2/CP.17):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All emissions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target; • Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target; • Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target. 	<p>Questions can be submitted via the MA Portal <http://process.unfccc.int/sites/ma>, and can be raised on the basis of background documents (see para. 8 above) accessible through the individual Party page <http://unfccc.int/national_reports/biennial_reports_and_iar/items/9119.php></p>
1 October to 27 November 2015	<p>The two Parties being assessed will answer the questions from all Parties that were submitted by 30 September 2015. Parties are not obligated to answer questions submitted after 30 September</p>	<p>Answers can be provided via the MA Portal <http://process.unfccc.int/sites/ma></p>
By 29 November 2015	<p>The secretariat will compile these questions and answers and upload them to the individual Party page upon the completion of answers by the Party</p>	<p>The compiled questions and answers can be accessed through the individual Party page <http://unfccc.int/national_reports/biennial_reports_and_iar/items/9119.php></p>

IV. Format, duration and other organizational issues of the multilateral assessment working group session

12. **Format and duration:** The third WGS of MA will be conducted for each of the two Parties, following the alphabetic order of the Party names. Following the practice and procedures of the previous WGS of the MA, flexibility is envisaged in terms of the time allocated to each Party. In this regard, questions submitted in advance of the MA WGS could be used as an indication for planning purposes. Table 2 below shows three scenarios for the format and duration of the MA WGS for each Party being multilaterally assessed.



Table 2
Format and duration of the working group session

Scenario	Duration	Format
Average	One hour for each Party	10 minutes of oral presentation by the Party, followed by 50 minutes in-session questions and answers
Minimum	15 minutes for a single Party if it receives few questions or no questions in advance of the working group session	5 minutes oral presentation by the Party, followed by 10 minutes in-session questions and answers
Maximum	Two hours for a single Party if it receives a large number of questions in advance of the working group session	20 minutes of oral presentation by the Party, followed by 100 minutes in-session questions and answers

13. For the oral presentation by Parties during WGS, Parties can summarize questions received and answers provided during the three-month question and answer period. In cases where Parties do not receive any questions during the question and answer period, they can summarize their progress made towards the achievement of their emission reduction target.
 14. **Representation of Parties:** Based on the anticipated nature of the potential questions, it is expected that a representative with competences in both policy and technical issues will speak on behalf of the Party being assessed during WGS.
 15. **Seating arrangements:** It is planned that the representative of the Party being assessed will speak from his or her seat on the floor, to ensure proximity to the technical experts that might be needed for advice and to facilitate a swift transition to the next Party.
 16. **Other organizational issues:** The third WGS of MA will be conducted in the WGS of SBI 43. In order to give Parties a chance to summarize their main conclusions and positions from the MA process, a brief statement by Parties who wish to do so is allowed at the end of WGS.
 17. WGS will be chaired by the Chair of the SBI, or his designate from the Bureau of the SBI. WGS, conducted in English, will be webcast and open to observers and the media.
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