



Summary report on the multilateral assessment of New Zealand at the forty-first session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The Conference of the Parties, by decision 1/CP.16, decided that developed country Parties should enhance the reporting in their national communications and submit biennial reports on their progress in achieving emission reductions. It also established a new process under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) – the international assessment and review (IAR) of emissions and removals related to developed country Parties' quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets – that aims to promote the comparability of efforts among all developed country Parties. The first round of the IAR process is to be conducted during the period 2014–2015.

2. According to the modalities and procedures for IAR specified in annex II to decision 2/CP.17, the multilateral assessment (MA), being part of the IAR process, is to be conducted for each developed country Party at a working group session of the SBI, with the participation of all Parties. The aim of the MA is to assess each Party's progress in implementation towards the achievement of emission reductions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target.

3. The first MA of New Zealand took place at a working group session during SBI 41, on 8 December 2014. Such a working group session is preceded by a three-month period of questions and answers; in the first month, any Party may submit written questions to the Party being assessed, which may respond to the questions within the remaining two months. Questions for New Zealand had been submitted in writing two months before the working group session by the following delegations: Brazil, China, Egypt, European Union, Japan, Saudi Arabia and United States of America. The United States also submitted written questions after the deadline. A list of the questions received and the answers provided by New Zealand can be found on the IAR web page for New Zealand.¹

¹ <http://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/biennial_reports_and_iar/international_assessment_and_review/application/pdf/sbi41-newzealand-full.pdf>.

II. Proceedings

4. The working group session was chaired by the SBI Chair, Mr. Amena Yauvoli. New Zealand was represented by Ms. Jo Tyndall, Climate Change Ambassador, Environment Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

5. Ms. Tyndall made an opening presentation, addressing the questions received prior to the working group session and the answers provided. She described New Zealand's unconditional target of a 5 per cent emission reduction by 2020 compared with the 1990 level. This target is equivalent to a quantified emission limitation or reduction objective of 96.8 over the period 2013–2020, and is thus considered more ambitious than the target for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. She emphasized that New Zealand plans to achieve the target through a combination of measures, which include domestic emission reductions, the removal of carbon dioxide by forests, participation in international carbon markets and recognition of a surplus achieved during the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. She stated that this approach is consistent with Kyoto Protocol rules and that the country is confident that it is well on track to achieve its unconditional target.

6. In addition, she elaborated on New Zealand's approach to measuring its progress, which will be consistent with Kyoto Protocol rules, in particular regarding the establishment of a carbon budget for the period 2013–2020 and the application of an activity-based approach for contributions from land use, land-use change and forestry. Regarding individual policies and measures (PaMs) and their effects, Ms. Tyndall explained that New Zealand's emissions trading scheme is considered to have the greatest effect. She highlighted the difficulties in estimating the effects of individual PaMs owing to the top-down approach used for the projections, which implicitly include the effects of PaMs. She also explained that at the moment it is difficult to determine the scale of contribution of units from market-based mechanisms to the achievement of New Zealand's target.

7. The opening presentation was followed by interventions and questions from the following delegations: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, Fiji, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden and United States. These questions were on New Zealand's conditional target of a 10–20 per cent emission reduction by 2020 compared with the 1990 level and its consistency with the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; the consideration of impacts on small island developing States; the understanding of the potential importance of the measures under consideration; details of the emissions trading scheme, including the setting of the cap, the inclusion of agriculture and forestry; the contribution of certain PaMs to closing the gap to the 2020 target; further information on PaMs related to agriculture; whether projections take into account the renewable energy target and the current share of renewables in the energy mix; details of land-use accounting; the intention to use certified emission reductions, keeping in mind New Zealand is not a Party with a target for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol; and further information on common metrics used. In response, the New Zealand delegation provided further explanations. Details can be found in the webcast of this session on the IAR web page for New Zealand.

8. In closing, the SBI Chair reminded New Zealand that any other observations by the Party on its MA process can be submitted within two months of the working group session, and that this will form part of its Party record for the MA. The SBI Chair thanked the delegation of New Zealand, all the other delegations and the secretariat for this successful MA session.
