



Summary report on the multilateral assessment of the United States of America 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 the United States of America 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 the United States had been submitted in writing two months before the working group session by the following delegations: Algeria, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, China, Egypt, European Union, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia and Sweden. A list of the questions received and the answers provided by the United States can be found on the IAR web page for the United States.¹

¹ <http://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/biennial_reports_and_iar/international_assessment_and_review/application/pdf/sbi41_usa-full.pdf>.

II. Proceedings

4. The working group session was chaired by the SBI Chair, Mr. Amena Yauvoli. The United States was represented by Mr. Richard Duke, Deputy Director of the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change.

5. Mr. Duke made an opening presentation, addressing the questions received prior to the working group session and the answers provided. He provided information on the institutional arrangements made by the United States, the progress to date in achieving its 2020 emission reduction target, and the additional policies and measures (PaMs) put in place since the publication of its first biennial report. Mr. Duke explained that in 2009, the United States made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the range of 17 per cent below the 2005 level by 2020. According to the emission projections reported in its first biennial report, the United States expects to be on track to achieve its target. To do so, the United States has put in place PaMs across all sectors and addressing all greenhouse gases.

6. Mr. Duke highlighted the progress the United States has made in the implementation of its federal and non-federal PaMs, in particular, the introduction of fuel economy standards, appliance efficiency standards, building codes and private sector innovation. The most prominent progress has been achieved through the promotion of electricity generation from wind and solar power, which more than doubled from 2009 to 2012, the shift from coal to natural gas, largely in the power sector, and the clean power plant programme addressing carbon pollution standards for new and existing power plants. He also highlighted the state, local and city actions to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and renewable energy and energy efficiency goals.

7. Mr. Duke discussed the impact of the investments the United States has made in innovation and clean energy research. Through the Recovery Act, the Department of Energy has invested more than USD 80 billion to support a wide range of clean energy projects across the nation. He mentioned the SunShot Initiative, electric bus batteries, biofuel production, and the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

8. The opening presentation was followed by interventions and questions from the following delegations: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, Fiji, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These questions were on the level of ambition of the 2020 emission reduction target of the United States and associated uncertainties relating to the target emission range and the role of land use, land-use change and forestry; consistency with the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; emission reduction targets for 2025 and 2030; the description of emission projection scenarios; factors driving emissions; peaking years in emission trends; assessment of the impact of the financial crisis on emission trends; estimation of the effect of PaMs; additional information on specific PaMs such as the Clean Power Plan programme, biofuel production and the use of shale natural gas; planned and ongoing PaMs addressing methane and perfluorocarbon emissions; interplay and complementarity of federal and non-federal PaMs; and the role of public consultation. In addition, questions were raised on actions to address the vulnerability of small islands developing States and on the global warming potential values to be used for reporting on emission trends in the second biennial report. In response, the United States delegation provided further explanations. Details can be found in the webcast of this session on the IAR web page for the United States.

9. In closing, the SBI Chair reminded the United States 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 the United States, all the other delegations and the secretariat for this successful MA session.
