United Nations

FCCC/SBI/2016/5

Framework Convention on
Climate Change

Distr.: General
15 March 2016

Original: English

Subsidiary Body for Implementation
Forty-fourth session
Bonn, 16–26 May 2016

Item 12 of the provisional agenda
Review of the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention

Functionality and accessibility of the climate change information network clearing house CC:iNet

Report by the secretariat

Summary

   This report presents an overview of the functionality and accessibility of the climate change information network clearing house CC:iNet, a web portal that serves as a clearing house for information related to education, training, public awareness, public access to information, public participation and international cooperation on these matters. It also presents the results of the CC:iNet user survey conducted in 2015 and outlines new opportunities for showcasing Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) activities. As of June 2015, all activities related to the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention have been incorporated into the ACE brand. This reflects more accurately the principles that guide these activities. Throughout this report, the terms "Article 6 of the Convention" and "ACE" are used interchangeably.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1.   At its eighteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted the eight-year Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention and decided that it would be reviewed in 2020, with an intermediate review of progress in 2016, to evaluate its effectiveness, identify any emerging gaps and needs, and inform any decisions on improving the effectiveness of the work programme, as appropriate.[1]

2.   COP 21 endorsed the terms of reference for the intermediate review of the Doha work programme[2] and requested the secretariat to prepare a report on the functionality and accessibility of the climate change information network clearing house CC:iNet[3] for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its forty-fourth session.[4]

B. Scope of the note

3.   This report presents an overview of the functionality and accessibility of CC:iNet. It also presents the results of the CC:iNet user survey conducted in 2015 and outlines new opportunities for showcasing activities related to the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

4.   SBI 44 may wish to consider the information contained in this report with a view to recommending ways to enhance access to information sources on the six elements covered by Article 6 of the Convention, as referred to in paragraph 6 below.

II. Current status of CC:iNet development

5.   CC:iNet is managed by the secretariat. In June 2015, during the 3rd Dialogue on Article 6 of the Convention, the Executive Secretary called for a new name to describe activity performed under Article 6 of the Convention. The name "Action for Climate Empowerment" (ACE) was chosen at SBI 42[5] and noted at SBI 43.[6] In future, all activity related to the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention will be incorporated into the ACE brand. For the purposes of this document, the terms "ACE" and "Article 6 of the Convention" should be regarded as synonymous.

6.   CC:iNet is an online clearing house for information on the six elements covered by Article 6 of the Convention: climate change education, training, public awareness, public access to information, public participation and international cooperation. It was designed to help governments, organizations and individuals to gain quick and easy access to ideas, strategies, contacts, experts and materials that can be used to motivate and empower people to take action on climate change.

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[1]   Decision 15/CP.18, paragraphs 1 and 2.
[2]   Decision 15/CP.21.
[3]   <http://unfccc.int/cc_inet/cc_inet/items/3514.php>.
[4]   Decision 15/CP.21, annex, paragraph 5(b).
[5]   FCCC/SBI/2015/15, paragraph 13.
[6]   FCCC/SBI/2015/22, paragraph 106.

7.   The secretariat was requested to develop CC:iNet as a platform for exchanging information and experiences between Parties, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations on the six elements covered by Article 6 of the Convention. Information on the portal has been organized according to these areas, facilitating information publishing, categorizing and retrieval.

8.   CC:iNet contains a database of the national focal points for Article 6 of the Convention, a database of organizations, a youth portal, a calendar, a search function and links to related external websites. Navigation is available in English and partially available in French and Spanish.

9.   CC:iNet is an online resource accessible from any Internet-capable device. Users must create a user account to publish information on CC:iNet. Registered and non-registered users can access the information on the web portal.

10.   Information is accessible by manually navigating the navigation menu or through the search function. After the launch of a prototype version in December 2005 and its evaluation in December 2007, several suggestions were made for enhancing the system. The resulting full-scale version of CC:iNet was released in October 2010 with improved functionalities.[7] As at July 2015, there were 791 registered CC:iNet users.[8]

III.   CC:iNet user survey 2015

A.   Description

11.   The CC:iNet user survey was conducted in 2015 for the report on the budget performance for the biennium 2014–2015 as at 30 June 2014[9] to determine the functionality and accessibility of the platform in relation to its usage, design, accessibility, structure and content. These results can also be used to shape the future of CC:iNet as an information-sharing platform.

12.   Survey respondents comprised registered and non-registered users from 53 countries, including representatives of governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, youth, United Nations organizations, local governments, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations and expert bodies.

13.   The user survey comprised a series of questions categorized into five sections: usage, design, accessibility, structure and content. The results are outlined below.

B.   Results

1.   Usage

14.   The majority of users had a low frequency rate of visits. Feedback related to frequency of visits, user satisfaction, user-friendliness and usefulness of information on CC:iNet was negative overall.

15.   More than half of respondents, 52.22 per cent, had visited CC:iNet for the first time before taking the survey. A total of 17.78 per cent had never visited, 12.22 per cent had visited monthly, 13.33 per cent had visited every six months and 4.44 per cent had visited weekly.

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[7] See document FCCC/SBI/2010/24.
[8] See document FCCC/SBI/2014/10, annex III.
[9] See document FCCC/SBI/2014/10.

16.   A total of 40.45 per cent of respondents had no opinion regarding satisfaction with CC:iNet usage. While 26.97 per cent were satisfied, 19.1 per cent were somewhat satisfied, 12.36 per cent were not satisfied and 1.12 per cent were very satisfied.

17.   In terms of user-friendliness, 32.95 per cent of the respondents found it user-friendly. A total of 29.55 per cent of the respondents had no opinion, 22.73 per cent found it somewhat user-friendly, 12.5 per cent found it not user-friendly and 2.27 per cent found it very user-friendly.

18.   A total of 39.77 per cent found the information on CC:iNet useful, 28.41 per cent had no opinion, 18.18 per cent found it somewhat useful and 13.64 per cent found it very useful.

2.   Design

19.   The user survey asked questions related to design and navigation of the website.

20.   A total of 35.71 per cent rated the design as good, 23.81 per cent said that there was need for some improvement, 22.62 per cent had no opinion, 11.9 per cent evaluated it as poor and 5.95 per cent evaluated it as excellent.

21.   To improve the design, some of the respondents recommended making the text bigger with clearer titles. In addition, respondents stated that too much information was presented on each page and the site was not very engaging, owing to lack of colour and images.

22.   A total of 71.43 per cent found that the current navigation provided easy access to information, while 28.57 per cent perceived the information as not easily accessible via navigation.

23.   According to some respondents, visualization and organization of information were areas that needed improvement. One respondent mentioned that the current navigation was too daunting for new visitors and could be improved by a clearer structure.

3.   Accessibility

24.   The survey included questions about how users most commonly connect to the Internet and to CC:iNet, including about barriers to accessing information.

25.   Most respondents reported that they connected to the Internet through an institutional connection (university, business, etc.) with a total of 39.51 per cent, while 27.16 per cent connected through a dial-up connection, mobile device, high speed connection, Internet cafe or shared connection. A total of 23.46 per cent connected only by high speed connection, 4.94 per cent on a mobile device and 2.47 per cent with a dial-up connection.

26.   A total of 86.08 per cent of respondents most commonly connected to CC:iNet using a computer, 5.06 per cent using a tablet and 2.53 per cent using a mobile phone; 6.33 per cent mentioned that they had never used CC:iNet.

27.   Less than half, 41.77 per cent, found CC:iNet easy to locate on the Internet, while 24.05 per cent found it somewhat easy and 10.13 per cent very easy. A total of 18.99 per cent of the respondents had no opinion while 5.06 per cent found it not easy.

28.   The search function and navigation structure are the two barriers identified by most of the respondents, each with 15.38 per cent. Other barriers mentioned include the limited non-English language content (12.82 per cent), limited Internet access (6.41 per cent) and others, such as unavailability of required information (3.85 per cent). A further 26.92 per

cent of respondents had experienced no barriers in terms of accessing information while 32.05 per cent had no opinion.

4. Structure

29. The survey addressed the structure of the information architecture and how easy it is to find needed information on CC:iNet.

30. Less than half of respondents, 41.03 per cent, found the navigation menu useful, 24.36 per cent found it somewhat useful, 7.69 per cent perceived it as not useful and 6.41 per cent found it very useful. A further 20.51 per cent had no opinion.

31. Of the respondents, 53.16 per cent used the search function, while 46.84 per cent did not.

32. A total of 28.57 per cent found the search function easy to use, while 18.18 per cent found it somewhat easy; 32.47 per cent had no opinion on how easy it was to use.

33. A total of 63.29 per cent of respondents easily found information on CC:iNet.

5. Content

34. The user survey addressed presentation and quality of information, areas that need improvement and suggestions related to CC:iNet content.

35. Of the respondents, 43.42 per cent found the presentation of information good, while 27.63 per cent stated that it needed improvement. A total of 10.53 per cent found it poor, while 5.26 per cent found it excellent and 13.16 per cent had no opinion.

36. In terms of quality of information on CC:iNet, 44.74 per cent of respondents indicated that it was good but 23.68 per cent mentioned that it needed improvement.

37. With regard to the areas where content could be improved, 54.1 per cent of respondents mentioned education. This was followed by public participation with 37.70 per cent, public awareness with 32.79 per cent, international cooperation with 32.79 per cent and international training with 29.51 per cent.

38. Of the respondents, 42.47 per cent found that visibility and design needed improvement. Some of the suggestions mentioned that user-friendliness, updated content, availability of content in other languages and relevant information on the activities of the national focal points on Article 6 of the Convention needed improvement.

IV. New opportunities for showcasing Action for Climate Empowerment activities

A. Survey implications

39. The survey results suggest that there is significant room for improvement of the current CC:iNet platform. CC:iNet was developed as an information-sharing platform, but it has become less effective in this application as social media and more modern websites related to climate change and the ACE focus areas become more widely used. Based on the survey information, the secretariat has identified how other UNFCCC web-based resources can be leveraged to more effectively fulfil the information-sharing function of CC:iNet.

These resources include the newly redesigned ACE web pages[10] on the UNFCCC website, the UNFCCC Newsroom[11] and multiple UNFCCC social media outlets.

B. UNFCCC website

40.   The original design of CC:iNet allowed Parties to submit information regarding action taken under Article 6 of the Convention. This core functionality will now be transferred to the ACE web pages. A page will be created as a repository for Party contributions such as good practices, events or other information related to ACE. All Party contributions on ACE will be presented chronologically and will include the name of the initiative, a brief summary of activities and any supporting documentation. Creating this repository will serve two functions. First, it will allow Parties to exchange information related to ACE. Second, it will allow the secretariat to track Party contributions for the purpose of further disseminating information on ACE-related activities.

41.   The secretariat's Communications and Outreach programme is currently exploring a comprehensive update to the UNFCCC website. Understanding the Party-driven demand for an information-sharing platform directly related to ACE activities will guide the redesign of this part of the website. It is also important to note that all information submitted to CC:iNet to date will remain on the UNFCCC website as an archive.

C. UNFCCC Newsroom

42.   All information formerly featured on CC:iNet will now be shared on the UNFCCC Newsroom pages. The Newsroom has emerged as an excellent vehicle for sharing the kind of information that appears on CC:iNet. From studies and reports that enhance action in ACE thematic areas to Party action related to ACE, the Newsroom will extend the reach of information, thereby fulfilling the ACE aim to improve public awareness and Party response. The Newsroom includes a search function, download functionality for key documents and the ability to link to relevant websites and resources as needed. By disseminating all ACE information out through the Newsroom, the information has greater visibility and the potential to enhance the implementation of the outcomes of COP 21 and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

D. Social media

43.   In addition to publication through the UNFCCC Newsroom, all ACE information, including contributions by Parties and resources for ACE practitioners, will be highlighted on UNFCCC social media accounts. Social media has emerged as an effective way to connect audiences with the information that is most relevant to them, to keep the network of regular CC:iNet users connected and disseminate ACE-related information to a wider audience. The secretariat will support this new method of reaching audiences by using the very active UNFCCC Twitter and Facebook accounts. This will provide a forum for the secretariat to interact with relevant stakeholders, and for such stakeholders to interact with one another. The secretariat maintains a number of social media accounts, including: the main English, French, Spanish and German Twitter accounts; the Executive Secretary's Twitter account; a Momentum for Change Twitter account; and the UNFCCC Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram accounts. The main English Twitter account has

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[10] <http://unfccc.int/cooperation_support/education_outreach/overview/items/8946.php>.
[11] <http://www.unfccc.int>.

274,000 followers (up from around 100 thousand in June of 2015), while the main Facebook account has 158,000 fans.[12] These channels will be used to amplify ACE-related information across multiple networks. For everything that would previously have been uploaded to CC:iNet, one or more of the following actions will be taken:

(a)   Party contributions will be highlighted on all UNFCCC Twitter and Facebook accounts, with links to Newsroom articles and the UNFCCC website;

(b)   Non-Party information that would previously have been shared on CC:iNet will be shared on the Newsroom web pages and promoted via UNFCCC social media accounts;

(c)   Engaging stories and images will be shared on the main Facebook account and other relevant UNFCCC Facebook accounts, such as the Adaptation Exchange account;

(d)   Compelling images will be shared on the secretariat Instagram account.

E.   Implementation

44.   Implementing this new strategy for sharing information related to ACE will require outreach so that ACE practitioners, youth and other interested individuals will know how to find the information they are looking for. This outreach will include: a clear message at the top of the existing CC:iNet landing page directing users to these new resources; an e-mail to focal points to inform them of the changes; and posts to social media so that networks understand that CC:iNet information will now be part of the secretariat's social sharing strategy. ACE staff will work with their network of contacts to ensure a smooth transition to this new style of information-sharing.

V.   Conclusions and matters for further consideration

45.   The UNFCCC secretariat remains committed to effective outreach regarding activities that enhance action on and understanding of Article 6 of the Convention. As the CC:iNet user survey indicates, the platform is outdated and the delivery of relevant information could be accomplished through the suite of web-based resources used by the secretariat for communication and outreach. These resources hold great potential to exceed the reach and awareness-raising capabilities of CC:iNet.

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[12]   Information as at 4 March 2016.