

Oral report by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies on the 2013-2015 review

25 October 2014, 10.00

- Thank you Co-chair,
- The SBI Chair and I would like to take this opportunity to brief Parties participating in this ADP meeting on the progress of work under the 2013-2015 review.
- As you may know, the COP decided to periodically review, with assistance from SBSTA and SBI, the adequacy of the long-term global goal of limiting global warming below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels (aka theme 1 of the review), and the overall progress made towards achieving this goal, including a consideration of the implementation of the commitments under the Convention (aka theme 2 of the review).
- This review is a first in the history of the Convention. Initiated in 2013 and scheduled to conclude in 2015, the review is also considering strengthening the long-term global goal, referencing various matters presented by science, including in relation to temperature rises of 1.5 °C. COP 21 in Paris is expected to take appropriate action based on the outcome of this review.
- The SBSTA and SBI established a joint contact group on the review, which is supported by a structured expert dialogue (SED). This dialogue aims to ensure the scientific integrity of the review through a focused exchange of views, information and ideas between experts and Parties.
- Since its inception, SED has convened three times and considered the key contributions of Working Groups I, II and III of the IPCC to the AR5 and information from some UN Agencies, reports from Parties and other processes under the Convention.
- SBSTA and SBI noted that the 2013–2015 review informs the broader UNFCCC process, through, inter alia, the material provided by experts, the summary reports on the meetings of the SED and the SED co-facilitators' reports to the COP. The summary report of SED 3 was made available to Parties recently and I encourage you to read it as it reflects the in-depth discussions of the findings of the contributions of Working Groups II and III of the IPCC to the AR5 as they pertain to the 2013–2015 review.
- At the SED meetings, Parties and IPCC and other experts engage in a remarkably constructive, productive and rich manner in all discussions. SED 2 and 3, for example, supported Parties in internalizing the key findings contained in AR5 WGII and AR5

WGIII, which are relevant to both themes of the 2013–2015 review and thus facilitated the consideration of those findings in a policy making context.

- In Lima, SED 4, will make a contribution to assessing the adequacy of the long-term global goal and overall progress made towards achieving it on the basis of the Synthesis Report of the AR5, which will be discussed next week in Copenhagen, and on information from other UN Agencies.
- While recognizing that the work of the SED is still ongoing, mindful of decision 1/CP.17, paragraph 6 which indicates that the ADP shall be informed, inter alia, by the outcomes of the 2013–2015 review, I would like to reiterate the SBSTA 40 and SBI 40 conclusions and encourage Parties to continue to take note of the information from the 2013–2015 review as they engage in the ADP process. In this context, the SED has highlighted several messages:
- First, and most important, regarding the nature of the 2°C limit. At SED 2 and 3 we learned from IPCC that climate-related impacts are already happening at the current degree of warming of 0.85 °C above pre-industrial level with significant adverse effects and that increasing magnitudes of warming will only increase severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts. This is an indication that any upper limit of global warming can no longer be seen as a safety warranting guardrail for preventing any dangerous anthropogenic interference. Instead the question about societally or otherwise acceptable risks of climate impacts needs to be discussed, considering that risks are increasing with higher temperatures. The higher we allow global temperature to rise, the higher the risks.
- At SED 3, IPCC experts stated repeatedly that assessing the adequacy of the upper limit of global warming in the light of Article 2 of the Convention involves both risk assessments and value judgments. In the AR5, the IPCC assessed risks across contexts and through time, providing an analytical solid framework that can provide a foundation for a collective agreement on how much global warming is acceptable.
- While recognizing that the work of the SED is still ongoing, in my view, the review has already shown to be a successful and promising vehicle to inform and support policy formulation, taking into account various values, while also recognizing that what constitutes an intolerable risk may well differ across sectors, regions and countries.
- The second message from the review I would like to convey relates to the feasibility of the 2°C limit in the context of a risk management approach as a basis for decision making on climate change. At SED 3, we learned from Working Group III of the IPCC that limiting warming below 2°C is both technically and economically still feasible. Limiting warming to this level can be done at relatively low to modest cost, although uncertainties remain in relation to the costs of adaptation, the valuation of avoided impacts through mitigation and of the mitigation co-benefits of adaptation.
- Remaining on a 2°C pathway requires nevertheless fundamental changes and entails risks associated not only with climate impacts but also, for example, with technology

development and diffusion at unprecedented scale. Such changes become more urgent for limiting warming below 1.5°C and delaying action has significant implications, including in terms of considerable higher costs, technology lock-in or loss and damage.

- Third, at SED 2 we understood that there are limitations related to working with a temperature limit only. For example, unlike global mean surface warming, the rate of global mean sea level rise depends also on the pathway of CO₂ emissions, not only the cumulative amount of CO₂ emitted. This is because global mean sea level rise responds more slowly than temperature (i.e. much delayed) to changes in the climate system. Nevertheless, such limitations are not changing the basic finding that we need to take urgent action. On the contrary, considering multiple limits calls for even stronger action!
- With regards to the role of the 2 °C limit in catalyzing action on climate change, we have seen that this upper limit, which was the result of an international policy option choice made in Copenhagen and Cancun, has already been successful in focusing scientific work, which is also well reflected in the AR5. This week, the 2/1.5 °C limit of global warming was mentioned throughout the interventions made under your deliberations, including in the context of INDCs, which is again a clear indication of its important catalytic role also in policy making.
- My final message relates to bringing together best available information from science and national information available in reports from Parties and other processes under the Convention. This is not an easy task and whatever progress we can make on it under the 2013-2015 review, I hope, could benefit any future work relating to a science-based management of the global pathway towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient future, thereby strengthening the science–policy interface.
- Finally, with regards to the science-policy interface, as the Chair of SBSTA, I would like to draw your attention to Article 9.2 of the Convention to remind us all about the important role the SBSTA should play in the science-policy interface.
- In closing, I would like you to picture this interface as a bridge between the science and policy worlds. We have now this bridge, but we need to walk on it from both directions and meet in the middle. To that end, the structured expert dialogue on the 2013-2015 review appears to have been a significant step forward. Let's meet in the middle!