

Work of the consultative Group of Experts on national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (SBI)

Views from Parties on the term and mandate of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) and the need for continuation of the group

Submission by the Republic of Nauru on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States

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1. Introduction

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) welcomes the opportunity to present its views on the term and mandate of the Consultative Group of Experts on national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and the need for continuation of this group.

At COP 15, the Parties reconstituted the CGE for a period of three years only, from 2010 to 2012. However, since COP 15, the Parties have taken a number of decisions that will increase the burden of national communication reporting, in terms of frequency and technical content. Consequently, these decisions create additional technical, institutional and capacity building challenges for many non-Annex I Parties.

2. Enhanced reporting will be facilitated by enhanced support from the CGE and NCSP

By decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 60, the Conference of the Parties agreed to “enhance reporting in national communications, including inventories, from Parties not included in Annex I, on mitigation actions and their effects, and support received, with additional flexibility to be given to the least developed country Parties and small island developing States”. The Parties agreed that national communications would be submitted every 4 years, with biennial update reports submitted as part of the national communication process every two years.

Subsequently, at COP 17, the Parties agreed that the first biennial update reports would be due in December 2014 and adopted detailed guidelines for biennial update reports (contained in Annex III to decision 1/CP.17)¹. In so doing, the Parties expressly recognized the difficulties faced by non-Annex I Parties in reporting under the Convention and the need to take into account national capabilities and circumstances, and build capacity. The Parties also recognized that the CGE could also play an important role in facilitating technical advice and support for the preparation and submission of the first biennial update report.

AOSIS is of the view that more frequent national communications, together with biennial update reporting, require additional financial and technical support. Access to ongoing support from the CGE for the preparation of national communications will assist non-Annex I Parties in improving the transparency, consistency and comparability of the information

¹ Decision 1/CP.17, Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

contained in these national communications, and will support efforts by non-Annex I Parties to report against more detailed UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines.

This ongoing support will be particularly helpful in addressing new or enhanced elements of the reporting process, including reporting on mitigation actions (establishment of quantitative goals, progress indicators, choice of methodologies, estimated outcomes, information on international market mechanisms, description of domestic measurement, reporting and verification arrangements) and reporting on finance, technology and capacity building needs, constraints and gaps, and on support received. It will also help countries in developing a consistent time series of GHG inventory data.

A reconstituted CGE should be buttressed by extension of the National Communication Support Programme (NCSP).

3. Term of the CGE

As per decision 5/CP.15, the current mandate of the CGE comes to an end in 2012. AOSIS supports the continuation of the CGE through to at least 2016, when subsequent national communications from non-Annex I Parties are to be submitted. This period of time will also enable the CGE to provide technical support to the biennial update reporting process, as agreed at COP 17.

4. Mandate of the CGE

In light of the foregoing, AOSIS is of the view that the following elements should be part of the extended mandate of the CGE:

4.1 Support for national communication reporting

AOSIS considers the work of both the CGE and the National Communication Support Programme (NCSP) to be essential sources of support to developing countries in preparing their national communications, and particularly in reporting on:

1. national GHG inventories;
2. vulnerability and adaptation assessments;
3. mitigation; and
4. cross-cutting issues (research and systematic observation, technology transfer, capacity-building, education, training and public awareness, information and networking and financial and technical support).

AOSIS believes the CGE should continue to be available to provide support to non-Annex I Parties in the implementation of their reporting obligations under the Convention in each of the above areas.

AOSIS also calls for the extension of the NCSP, or initiation of a similar programme, to provide technical support and collaborate with the CGE in the successful execution of the expanded mandate.

4.2 Consistency, transparency, completeness, accuracy and timeliness of reported information

With respect to both national communication reporting and biennial update reports, the CGE has an important role to play in working with Parties to facilitate the presentation of information in a consistent, transparent, complete, accurate and timely manner, and in a manner that reflects national circumstances, in line with the objectives of the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in

Annex I to the Convention (decision 17/CP.8, Annex), and the newly-adopted UNFCCC biennial update reporting guidelines for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (decision 17/CP.17, Annex III).

The CGE's continuing technical support and capacity building work in these areas will facilitate the review of information in national communications, including the review of biennial update reports agreed at COP 16 and COP 17. The UNFCCC will benefit from information that is presented in a consistent, transparent, complete, accurate and timely manner from non-Annex I Parties.

AOSIS is of the view that a compilation and synthesis of Second National Communications, prepared by the secretariat, will assist the CGE in identifying areas in which further technical and capacity building support is needed.

4.3 Develop methodologies and guidelines for the formulation and presentation of NAMAs

AOSIS has previously highlighted the need for assistance in the formulation and presentation of NAMAs and this is an area in which the CGE may also be able to provide assistance to developing country Parties. Biennial update reporting guidelines seek information on mitigation actions, including information on methodologies, estimated emission reductions, information on international market mechanisms and information on the description of domestic measurement, reporting and verification arrangements. These are all areas in which the CGE could facilitate assistance to Parties in reporting.

4.4 Extract lessons learnt and best practices in adaptation from developing country national communications

Although international consultation and analysis of individual biennial update reports will take place under the SBI, it may be valuable to ensure that elements of national communications can be reviewed through the CGE. For example, where national communications or biennial update reports provide information on constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity building needs, the CGE may be of use in compiling and synthesizing this information and making recommendations on how best to address these needs. Adaptation in particular is a priority issue for SIDS and LDCs. The CGE may have a role to play in compiling and synthesizing information presented in national communications and in biennial reporting updates on financial, technical and capacity building needs in the area of adaptation. There is a need to ensure that adaptation needs reported through the national communication process are adequately acknowledged and reflected within the UNFCCC process, and that these needs are effectively matched with support.

4.5 Facilitation of assistance to individual Parties from the roster of experts

The CGE may have a role to play in assisting Parties in identifying and addressing gaps in reporting, and in facilitating access to technical, financial and capacity building assistance to close these reporting gaps. A trial period could begin in 2013 where experts drawn from the Roster of Experts are invited, at the request of non-Annex I Parties, and facilitated by the CGE, to provide inventory preparers in non-Annex I countries with advice and assistance to help fill reporting gaps, improve the quality of inventories, identify information sources to help with reporting, and facilitate improvements in national communications. This facility would strengthen the reporting of non-Annex I countries.

4.6 Advice and facilitation of financial and technical assistance to individual Parties

The CGE should be able, at the request of a Party, to provide advice and facilitate assistance to that Party regarding its reported mitigation actions, including advice and facilitation of financial and technical assistance, including with respect to technology transfer and capacity building. Non-Annex I Parties should be able to request assistance directly from the CGE in these areas (facilitation of financial and technical assistance), as all Parties are currently able to do through the facilitative branch of the Kyoto Protocol's Compliance Committee.

4.7 Play a supporting role in technical review of national communications or elements of national communications for interested Non-Annex I Parties

Without duplicating the work of the SBI in the area of international consultation and analysis (ICA), beginning in 2013, the CGE could assist non-Annex I Parties in improving their national communications by facilitating technical reviews of national communications or elements of national communications by experts drawn from the Roster of Experts for those Non-Annex I Parties that are interested in improving the quality of their emissions inventories, or improving elements of their inventories, or that seek assistance in the presentation of information on NAMAs. This opportunity may be helpful for Parties wishing to improve their emissions inventories in order to access market mechanisms in the post-2012 period.

4.8 Review of the UNFCCC reporting guidelines

The CGE should also be tasked to continue its work in reviewing the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties, as recommended in the Annex to the 2011 CGE progress report, FCCC/SBI/2011/5/Rev.1.

5. Draft COP Decision

The SBI should be requested to prepare a draft COP decision which outlines the new term and mandate of a reconstituted CGE and initiates a work programme for the CGE.

The CGE should continue to be mandated to provide support to developing countries in all elements of the preparation of their national communications, including initial biennial update reports. This support should include advice and facilitation of assistance to Parties, on request, in the development and communication of their NAMAs.

The CGE should be mandated to work with and through the UNFCCC roster of experts to respond to requests from individual non-Annex I Parties for assistance in identifying and addressing gaps in reporting, and facilitate financial, technical and capacity building advice and assistance.

The CGE work programme should include a trial period for voluntary technical reviews of non-Annex I National Communications, elements of national communications or NAMAs, at the request of non-Annex I Parties, with technical reviewers drawn from the UNFCCC roster of experts. It should also set out a process for reviewing the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties, implementing the recommendations outlined in the Annex of the CGE progress report to the SBI (FCCC/SBI/2011/5/Rev.1).