

**Workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition**  
**Submission by the Republic of Nauru**  
**on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**  
**pursuant to decision -/CP.17, paragraph 8**

28 February 2012

**Introduction**

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet. Parties to the UNFCCC have agreed that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, with a view to accelerating the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions.

At its seventeenth session, the Conference of Parties (COP) noted with grave concern the significant gap between the aggregate effect of Parties' pledged mitigation contributions and an aggregate emission pathway consistent with having a *likely* chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.<sup>1</sup> The COP therefore launched a workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition (Workplan) to identify and to explore options for a range of actions that can *close the ambition gap* with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties.<sup>2</sup>

Nauru welcomes the opportunity to present views on behalf of the 43 members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) on options and ways for further increasing the level of mitigation ambition.

**The impact of climate change on small island developing states**

***Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report***

Small islands, whether located in the tropics or higher latitudes, have characteristics which make them especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, sea-level rise, and extreme events. Sea-level rise is expected to exacerbate inundation, storm surge, erosion and other coastal hazards, thus threatening vital infrastructure, settlements and facilities that support the livelihood of island communities. There is strong evidence that under most climate change scenarios, water resources in small islands are likely to be seriously compromised. Climate change is likely to heavily impact coral reefs, fisheries and other marine-based resources.

Enhancing mitigation ambition is essential in order to minimize adverse and potentially catastrophic effects for all countries, and is particularly critical to preserving the viability and survival of small island developing states (SIDS) and other vulnerable countries. Significant impacts have already been observed in SIDS as a result of less than 1°C warming above preindustrial temperatures, including increased spread of diseases, and more intense floods, heat waves and storms. Damage to homes and communities from sea level rise, saltwater intrusion on agricultural lands and destruction of freshwater supplies are

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<sup>1</sup> Decision -/CP.17, PP2

<sup>2</sup> Decision -/CP.17, OP7

occurring in many SIDS. Kiribati and the Maldives have already lost some of their islands to rising waters, and land loss has been reported in other Pacific Island countries and the Caribbean. Shoreline erosion and flooding has caused major damage to roads, public utilities and households, and saltwater damage to agricultural crops and the freshwater lens has caused severe food and fresh water shortages in a number of low-lying islands.

Millions of the world's inhabitants, particularly in SIDS and other coastal communities, depend on the health of coral reefs and related ecosystems as a primary source of food and income, and for protection from storms, tsunamis and coastal erosion. Thermal stress has caused unprecedented widespread coral bleaching since the 1970s. Rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels is causing ocean acidification and poses another serious threat to coral reefs. It has been estimated that corals around the world will stop growing at an atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration above 450ppm and start dissolving above 550ppm. A safe concentration for corals would likely be far below 450ppm.

The adoption of a mitigation pathway and aggregate mitigation effort consistent with a limitation of global average surface temperature increases to well below 1.5°C cannot eliminate sea level rise, but it can reduce the rate of rise significantly, providing a greater opportunity for coastal ecosystems and atolls to adapt naturally. Nor can these temperature thresholds guarantee the survival of coral reefs, but they would significantly reduce the risk of complete loss of coral reefs and reduce the frequency and intensity of bleaching, providing greater opportunities for the reefs to adapt to warmer conditions. In sum, while a limit on warming of well below 1.5°C would reduce the likelihood of the most devastating impacts, it would still present serious challenges to ecosystems and human habitation in SIDS and other vulnerable communities worldwide.

### **The ambition gap**

Countries representing over 80% of the world's emissions first put forward mitigation pledges at or soon after COP15 in Copenhagen. These pledges have remained largely unchanged, despite several scientific assessments drawing attention to their inadequacy and the need to increase ambition to meet the below 2°C global goal, **or the stated goal of over 100 countries including AOSIS of well below 1.5°C**. Among these scientific assessments is the recent UNEP "Bridging the Emissions Gap" report,<sup>3</sup> which concluded that there is a large gap between the level of reductions that might be provided by current pledges and the reductions needed if warming is likely to remain below 2°C or well below 1.5°C. For warming to be likely to remain below 2°C, the UNEP report states that global emissions, which were at 48 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e, would need to peak and decline rapidly to approximately 44 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2020. However, with global emissions still growing and projected to reach approximately 56 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e along a business-as-usual path by 2020, reaching this goal will require approximately 12 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e of reductions in 2020.

In contrast with this scientifically determined mitigation requirement of 12 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e, the UNEP report concludes that only 6 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e of reductions would be achieved in the best case scenario based on current pledges, and as little as 2 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e of reductions in less optimistic

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<sup>3</sup> See "Bridging the Emissions Gap", UNEP, November 2011. Available online at: [www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/bridgingemissionsgap/](http://www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/bridgingemissionsgap/)

scenarios.<sup>4</sup> Two main factors determine whether the higher or lower of these figures is met: (1) whether Parties elect to implement their higher “conditional” or their lower “unconditional” pledges, and (2) whether the loopholes available to Annex I countries, such as the use of surplus AAUs and lenient LULUCF accounting rules, are effectively eliminated. The UNEP report further notes that there are additional loopholes that the study does not account for, including double counting offsets and non-additional offsets, that would further weaken the impact of the pledged reductions. Ultimately, the UNEP report concluded that the Copenhagen pledges would put the world on a path toward 2.5°C to 5°C of warming by the end of the century; significantly above the agreed global temperature goal.

If emissions are not reduced in line with scientific requirements in the near-term, it would be extraordinarily difficult or impossible to compensate later on. In other words, the chance to achieve the below 2°C and well below 1.5°C goals may be irrevocably lost even before 2020. First, there are positive feedbacks within the climate system (for example, methane release from warming permafrost and from the Arctic continental shelf, and biogenic carbon releases from forest dieback) that, if triggered, could render human efforts to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions irrelevant. Second, the steady increase in carbon-emitting infrastructure creates a large financial and political momentum behind a high emission pathway.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) concluded in their “2011 World Energy Outlook” that there is little scope for delaying action to move onto a 450ppm emissions trajectory without having to take the costly and politically difficult steps of retiring energy-related capital stock early. **It is important to note that a 450ppm scenario in their assessment would not be sufficient to provide a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C, let alone well below 1.5°C.**<sup>5</sup> According to the IEA, 80% of the cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emitted worldwide between 2009 and 2035 is already “locked-in” by capital stock that either exists now or is under construction and will still be operational by 2035. If internationally coordinated action is not taken **by 2017**, the IEA projects that all permissible emissions in the 450ppm scenario would come from the infrastructure then existing, so that all new infrastructure from 2017 until 2035 would need to be zero-carbon, or emitting infrastructure would need to be retired before the end of its economic lifetime to make room for new investments.<sup>6</sup>

The UNEP and IEA reports, along with many others appearing in the scientific literature, underscore the urgent need for countries to increase their efforts to immediately reduce greenhouse gas emissions. **Failure to do so would be catastrophic for all countries and particularly for SIDS and other vulnerable countries and communities around the world.**

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<sup>4</sup> Note, these results are updated from UNEP’s earlier “The Emissions Gap Report” (2010), and present an even more pessimistic picture of the inadequacy of the pledges relative to a 2°C pathway.

<sup>5</sup> The IEA estimates that an atmospheric concentration of 450ppm would provide only a 50/50 chance limiting average global temperature rise to below 2 degrees. UNEP estimated that a much lower 415ppm is consistent with a *likely* chance (greater than 66%) of limiting temperature rise to below 2 degrees.

<sup>6</sup> International Energy Agency, “World Energy Outlook 2011”, November 2011. Available for purchase online at: <http://www.iea.org/w/bookshop/add.aspx?id=428>

## Further mitigation potential exists to close the gap

Importantly, however, the UNEP report emphasized that the overwhelming conclusion of global mitigation scenarios is that a wide portfolio of technically and economically viable measures can be taken to close the gap. The ambition gap can be immediately narrowed by resolving some issues regarding the current pledges, which include:

- Implementing the more ambitious “conditional” pledges (potential reduction of 2-3 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- Minimizing the use of “lenient Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) credits” and surplus emission credits (potential reduction of 2-3 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).

Additional policies and measures to enhance mitigation ambition could include, but are not limited to, the following measures:<sup>7</sup>

- Increasing the global share of renewables in energy supply from roughly 10% at present to 15% by 2020 (potential reduction of 4 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e), or to 20% by 2020 (potential to completely close the ‘ambition gap’).
- Shifting the mix of fossil fuels used in energy production (potential reduction of 0.5 to 1 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- Reducing emissions from international aviation and shipping (potential reduction of 0.3 to 0.5 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- Significantly reducing subsidies for fossil fuels (potential reduction of 2 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).
- Intensifying energy efficiency improvements offers further potential to close the gap.
- Strong action to reduce emissions from non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases, such as methane and HFCs, as well as other “short-lived climate forcers”, recognizing that negotiations are ongoing under the Montreal Protocol to address some non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases.

## The Workplan

The Workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition must enable the identification and exploration of options for a range of short-term actions that can be put in place to close the ambition gap, with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties and the delivery of a global mitigation pathway consistent with the limitation of global temperature increases to below 2 degrees and well below 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. AOSIS proposes that the Workplan should also help to facilitate a shared understanding of how Parties can overcome the challenges at the national level that are preventing the development, adoption and implementation of more ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets by developed countries and NAMAs by developing countries. In addition, Parties that have not yet submitted targets or NAMAs should be encouraged to do so in the context of the Workplan.

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<sup>7</sup> Potential reductions are drawn from the UNEP “Bridging the Emissions Gap” report (2011); “Joint Report by IEA, OPEC, OECD and World Bank on fossil fuel and other energy subsidies” (2010); and the IPCC “Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources” (2011).

Workplan activities in 2012 should include a series of in-session workshops, submissions, and discussions **that culminate at COP18 with the adoption of more ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets by developed countries and NAMAs by developing countries, including QELROs for Annex I Kyoto Protocol Parties as unconditional legally-binding, economy-wide emission reduction commitments and comparable commitments for Annex I non-Kyoto Protocol Parties, that close the ambition gap, along with mechanisms for ensuring the appropriate scope and scale of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building for NAMAs.**

The Workplan discussions should recall developed country Parties' commitment under Article 4.2 of the Convention to adopt mitigation policies and measures that demonstrate they are taking the lead in modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions consistent with the objective of the Convention.

The Workplan should provide meaningful avenues for engagement by observer states, intergovernmental organisations and members of civil society, particularly those with a specific or sectoral focus on greenhouse gas emissions at a significant scale, and those responsible for implementation at a regional, sub-national, or local level.

***In-session workshop on enhancing mitigation ambition and means of implementation  
Bonn, 14-25 May 2012***

An in-session workshop on enhancing mitigation ambition is scheduled for the first negotiating session of 2012, separate and apart from the in-session workshops on the clarification of assumptions and conditions associated with the existing pledges -- agreed under a separate Durban decision.

Part 1 of the workshop should include presentations by international experts and research institutes on the results of relevant technical analyses regarding the size of the ambition gap, scale of emission reductions to be achieved by the current pledges by Annex I Parties and Non-Annex I Parties, separately and collectively, and their relative contributions to closing the gap. This should be followed by presentations on options and ways that may be identified to close this gap. In organizing this workshop, the secretariat should ensure a balanced geographical participation of experts and organizations.

In AOSIS's view, it would be appropriate to invite, among others, representatives of:

- UNEP on the ambition gap and the scale of Annex I and Non-Annex efforts to close it;
- the IPCC and FAO on potential climate change impacts from temperature increases projected from current aggregated mitigation pledges;
- the International Energy Agency (IEA);
- the IPCC, REN-21 and IRENA on findings of the IPCC's Special Report on Renewable Energy (SRREN) and REN-21's Renewables Global Status Report (GSR 2011); and
- ICAO and IMO on existing and potential mitigation measures for the international shipping and aviation sectors that will help close the ambition gap.

For Part 2 of the workshop, Annex I Parties should be invited to make presentations based on their national circumstances regarding the following:

1. Domestic policies and measures that would enable them to raise the level of ambition of their current economy-wide emission reduction targets and pledges and/or overperform on existing targets, including (a) increasing the share of energy derived from renewable sources, (b) increasing energy efficiency, (c) reducing subsidies for fossil fuel, (d) accelerating the retirement of fossil fuel intensive infrastructure, (e) shifting the mix of fossil fuels used in energy production, and (f) other policies and measures identified by Parties;
2. The emission reduction potential of such policies and measures, including their aggregate contribution toward closing the ambition gap (in GtCO<sub>2</sub>e); and
3. The financial, technological, legal and other constraints preventing the adoption of such policies and measures.

Non-Annex I Parties, observer states, intergovernmental organisations, and members of civil society, particularly those with a specific or sectoral focus on greenhouse gas emissions at a significant scale, should also be provided the opportunity to make presentations related to raising the level of ambition of Annex I economy-wide emission reduction targets.

For Part 3 of the workshop, Non-Annex I Parties should be invited to make presentations based on their national circumstances regarding the following:

1. The means of implementation required, including finance, technology and capacity building, that would enable individual Parties to develop and implement new, more ambitious NAMAs and/or overperform on existing NAMAs;
2. Domestic policies and measures that would comprise such NAMAs, which may include as appropriate (a) increasing the share of energy derived from renewable sources, (b) increasing energy efficiency, (c) reducing subsidies for fossil fuel, (d) accelerating the retirement of fossil fuel intensive infrastructure, (e) shifting the mix of fossil fuels used in energy production, and (f) other policies and measures identified by Parties;
3. The emissions reduction potential of such NAMAs (in GtCO<sub>2</sub>e), including their aggregate contribution toward closing the ambition gap;
4. Any other constraints preventing the adoption of such NAMAs.

Annex I Parties, observer states, intergovernmental organisations, and members of civil society, particularly those with a specific or sectoral focus on greenhouse gas emissions at a significant scale, should also be provided the opportunity to make presentations related to raising the level of ambition of Non-Annex I NAMAs.

For Part 4 of the workshop, Annex I Parties should be invited to make presentations regarding the potential scale and nature of financial resources, transfer of technology and capacity building to be made available by Annex I Parties for enabling NAMAs, as well as the current challenges and constraints related to the provision of such means of implementation.

The in-session workshop should include time for questions and answers. The workshop should seek to identify and narrow the options and range of actions that can close the ambition gap with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties. The secretariat should be requested to prepare a synthesis report on the workshop after its completion.

***Submissions by Parties to further elaborate on opportunities to enhance existing mitigation ambition and means of implementation***

*16 July 2012*

Parties, observer states, intergovernmental organisations, and members of civil society should be invited to elaborate in submissions on the information presented at the May in-session workshop, as well as respond to the synthesis report of the Secretariat. These submissions should be compiled by the Secretariat and posted on the UNFCCC website.

***Ministerial conference on enhancing mitigation ambition and means of implementation***

*New York, September 2012*

A ministerial conference should be convened in the margins of the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly to provide a forum for high-level representatives of Annex I and Non-Annex I Parties to consider new, more ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets and NAMAs respectively, and provision by Annex I Parties of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building for NAMAs. Discussions should focus on the new economy-wide emission reduction targets and NAMAs Parties are prepared to consider, as well as any challenges or constraints to their development, adoption and implementation.

***High-level engagement on enhancing mitigation ambition and means of implementation as necessary***

Drawing upon the in-session workshops and relevant work in other forums, AOSIS proposes further high-level engagement as needed to consider and take decisive action to increase mitigation ambition. Discussions should focus on more ambitious targets and NAMAs, as well as any challenges or constraints to their development, adoption and implementation.

***In-session workshop and negotiations on enhancing mitigation ambition and means of implementation***

*location TBD, October 2012*

A second workshop at an October session should be organized for Annex I and Non-Annex I Parties to consider the synthesis report of the first in-session workshop and results of the Ministerial Conference with the aim of narrowing down the options of Parties to enhance the mitigation ambition of their targets and NAMAs. The workshop should be followed immediately by negotiations during the October session towards an outcome at COP18.

***Ministerial Pre-COP***

*Seoul, November 2012*

Drawing on the results of the second in-session workshop, the Ministerial Pre-COP should provide Annex I and Non-Annex I Parties the opportunity to further propose more ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets, pledges and NAMAs.

## **COP18**

*Doha, November 2012*

Annex I and Non-Annex I Parties should adopt new, more ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets and NAMAs respectively, including QELROs for Annex I Kyoto Protocol Parties as unconditional, legally-binding, economy-wide emission reduction commitments and comparable commitments for Annex I non-Kyoto Protocol Parties.

### **The Workplan in 2013 and beyond**

A similar series of submissions, workshops, and discussions is likely to be needed beyond 2012 to continue to identify ways to ramp up mitigation ambition quickly and cost effectively and to address the challenges and constraints that continue to inhibit the development and implementation of more ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets and NAMAs. The Workplan should continue in a progressive and iterative approach, with a view to enhancing mutual confidence and creating an upward spiral of mitigation ambition.



## Schedule of activities

<b>Activities in 2012</b>	<b>Date (location)</b>
In-session workshop on enhancing mitigation ambition	14-25 May (Bonn)
Synthesis report by the secretariat summarizing the workshop	15 June
Submissions to further elaborate on opportunities in Annex I Parties to enhance mitigation ambition	16 July
Submissions to further elaborate on opportunities in non-Annex I Parties to enhance mitigation ambition and the means of implementation required	16 July
High-level conference on enhancing mitigation ambition	September (New York)
In-session workshop on enhancing mitigation ambition	October (TBD)
Pre-COP Ministerial Meeting	November (Seoul)
Adoption of higher ambition economy-wide emission reduction targets and NAMAs (and second commitment period quantified economy-wide emission reduction commitments for Annex I KP Parties)	Nov-Dec (Doha)

<b>Activities in 2013 and beyond</b>	<b>Date (location)</b>
Submissions on additional opportunities in Annex I Parties to enhance mitigation ambition	early March
Submissions on additional opportunities in non-Annex I Parties to enhance mitigation ambition and means of implementation required	early March
In-session workshop on enhancing mitigation ambition	June (Bonn)
Synthesis report by the secretariat summarizing the workshops	mid-June
Submissions to further elaborate on additional opportunities in Annex I Parties to enhance mitigation ambition	mid-July
Submissions to further elaborate on additional opportunities in non-Annex I Parties to enhance mitigation ambition means of implementation required	mid-July
High-level conference on enhancing mitigation ambition	September (New York)
In-session workshop and negotiations on enhancing mitigation ambition	October (TBD)
Pre-COP Ministerial Meeting	November (TBD)
Adoption of higher ambition economy-wide emission reduction targets and NAMAs (and second commitment period quantified economy-wide emission reduction commitments for Annex I KP Parties)	Nov-Dec (TBD)