

U.S. Submission on Ambition

The United States views the ambition work stream as an integral part of the ADP's work. The UNFCCC plays an essential role in promoting ambition, importantly through the ADP, but also through many other bodies and groups. Ambition should also be advanced through every other avenue possible as well. All Parties should be addressing ambition at home, through bilateral and plurilateral partnerships, and of course within the UNFCCC. As countries address ambition in these ways, they should also encourage subnational entities and the private sector to advance ambition.

Below, we identify some of the ways the United States is working to advance ambition in a variety of settings, we outline concepts for how the UNFCCC can further assist Parties in advancing their own ambition, and we comment on catalyzing non-state action.

Domestic Efforts

In 2012, U.S. carbon emissions fell to the lowest level in two decades – even as the economy continued to grow. In June, President Obama announced the U.S. Climate Action Plan, which, along with existing policies, puts the United States on a path to reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in the range of 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. Among other things, the Climate Action Plan:

- Directs the Environmental Protection Agency to work closely with states, industry and other stakeholders to establish carbon pollution standards for both new and existing power plants;
- Commits to partnering with industry and stakeholders to develop fuel economy standards for heavy-duty vehicles to further reduce fuel consumption post-2018; leverages new opportunities to reduce pollution of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs); directs agencies to develop a comprehensive methane strategy; and commits to protecting forests and critical landscapes;
- Increases funding for clean energy technology across all government agencies by 30 percent, to approximately \$7.9 billion;
- Directs the Department of the Interior to permit enough renewable energy development — such as wind and solar — on public lands by 2020 to power more than 6 million homes.

International Efforts

The United States also continues to advance ambition through numerous efforts on the international stage, in particular by pressing for a phase-down of the production and consumption of HFCs, which is one of the single largest mitigation actions that can be taken by the international community, representing reductions of up to 90 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent through 2050. These efforts include:

- Pursuing a phase down of the production and consumption of HFCs through the Montreal Protocol. At the September 2013 G-20 summit, building on the agreement by the leaders of the U.S. and China, G-20 countries expressed support for using the institutions and expertise of the Montreal Protocol to phase down HFCs. The next step is to establish a contact group at the October, 2013 Montreal Protocol meeting to discuss an HFC phase down amendment.
- Working to end public financing for new coal-fired power plants internationally, except in rare circumstances. Most recently, the United States was joined in this commitment by the leaders of

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The United States will continue to work with those countries to secure the support of other countries and multilateral development banks to adopt similar policies.

- Continuing to work through the G-20, which also endorsed the development of and participation in voluntary peer review processes in efforts to phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. The International Energy Agency estimates that eliminating subsidies – amounting to more than \$500 billion annually – would reduce greenhouse gas emissions 10 percent below business-as-usual levels in 2050.
- The Clean Energy Ministerial is helping countries to develop and implement a broad range of innovative low-carbon technologies and practices that can substantially reduce emissions in the years to come. Thanks in part to a technical exchange facilitated under the Clean Energy Ministerial, India became the first country in the world to comprehensively regulate the performance, safety, and quality of light-emitting diodes (LEDs).
- The Climate and Clean Air Coalition has raised awareness at a political level of the importance of action on short-lived climate pollutants, and has begun an international effort to reduce these pollutants. It has grown to 34 country partners and 38 non-country partners in just over 18 months, and has raised more than \$60 million in new funding and pledges. Among other things, it is:
 - piloting and promoting alternatives to HFCs;
 - working with cities to reduce methane and black carbon from municipal solid waste (MSW) and landfills;
 - cooperating with the private sector to avoid methane leakage, venting, and flaring from oil and gas production;
 - conducting regional assessments to highlight high-potential, cost-effective mitigation policies; and
 - addressing black carbon from brick kilns, cookstoves, and diesel engines.

Increasing Ambition in the UNFCCC

Enhancing Existing Pledges and Encouraging New Pledges

To reiterate from our last submission, we believe that there are several actions that could be taken to enhance the ambition of pre-2020 pledges:

- First, Parties who have not yet submitted pledges should be encouraged to do so. Many of these Parties are already undertaking ambitious action domestically, and should be encouraged to come forward with pledges, thereby receiving due acknowledgment for their actions. **Emissions from Parties that have not pledged are projected to be more than 20% of global emissions by 2020**, signifying the urgency of encouraging them to come forward.
- Second, **Parties who have not clarified their pledges should do so as soon as possible**. For many countries, these pledges represent substantial effort to mitigate emissions, but unless the world community can understand these pledges, and the ambition embedded therein, we cannot aggregate global efforts or give Parties proper credit for their ongoing actions.

- Third, we reiterate our suggestion to the Secretariat to **prominently display the current pledges on the UNFCCC website**, as well as an indication of which and how many Parties have put forward a pledge.
- Fourth, we should **develop a system to prevent the double counting of emission reductions** among countries that are using offsets to meet part of their international mitigation commitments. Developing such a system under the Framework for Various Approaches (FVA) would help contribute to greater transparency and ambition in the pre-2020 period. The U.S. has laid out clear recommendations in our submission to SBSTA on the FVA regarding methods to increase transparency and avoid double counting of emissions reductions among countries that are engaged in emissions trading in the pre-2020 time period.
- **Fifth, we should implement the transparency outcomes in the Cancun agreements and of subsequent COPs.** Developed country Parties should provide their biennial reports in a timely manner, on January 1, 2014. The United States is finalizing its Biennial Report. Developing country Parties are to provide their biennial update reports by December 31, 2014, in order to reflect meaningful and transparent mitigation actions. These reports can be used as a means of reviewing actions to enhance ambition in the pre-2020 time frame.

How the Convention Can Help Parties Increase Ambition

We should broadly consider how the Convention can help Parties increase ambition beyond just the remit of the ADP. While the ADP has the mandate to consider pre-2020 ambition generally, we should examine various bodies and work streams within the Convention to see whether adjustments would help Parties increase their national ambition. In our experience, there are essentially four components of national processes to reduce emissions. In developing national strategies, a country must generally:

- Assess its current sources of emissions;
- Identify mitigation opportunities;
- Facilitate investment; and
- Implement actions.

The Convention can play a number of useful roles in promoting the development and implementation of these actions. The ambition work stream might consider how the Convention can continue or enhance its work to increase mitigation ambition using some or all of the above tools. We believe the detailed AOSIS submission on Workstream 2 contains a number of relevant and helpful suggestions for how the Convention might support Parties in their identification of low-cost mitigation opportunities, including a structured process for Party discussion and expert consultation. We support a discussion about their proposal and these elements.

1. **Assessing Sources of Emissions:** The Convention can enhance ambition by providing additional or revised technical guidance for assessing current sources of emissions. More detailed reporting guidance might encourage greater precision in greenhouse gas measurement, which would enable countries to more specifically identify current sources of emissions and the most cost-effective opportunities for reduction.

2. **Identifying Mitigation Opportunities:** Once a country understands where its emissions are coming from, it can then begin to identify mitigation opportunities to reduce those emissions. The Convention may be able to enhance ambition by raising awareness of ongoing actions, including low emissions development strategies, and convening Parties to share knowledge of best practices.
3. **Facilitate Investment:** Reducing the size of the emissions gap requires shifting the pattern of investment flows towards climate-friendly/low-emission technologies. Our challenge is to take a limited but robust core of public money, combine that with smart policies – *supported by both developed and developing countries alike* – to catalyze maximum private investment, and to shift investment flows away from high-carbon and towards low-carbon investments. The Convention can play a role in both providing the technical guidance that assists in creating enabling environments to attract more investments, and in raising awareness about the low-carbon investment opportunities in those countries.
4. **Implement Actions:** The Convention can enhance ambition by completing the technical guidance for the Cancun MRV system. The MRV system is a useful tool for enhancing the implementation of mitigation actions in several important ways. The MRV system creates a clear global picture of the international mitigation landscape by encouraging Parties to publicize clear goals and update their progress on fulfilling them. When Parties are aware of the mitigation landscape and confident that other Parties are taking action, they are more likely to take action themselves, thus encouraging a “race to the top.”

Catalyzing Enhanced Non-State Action

- We suggest considering how to maximize the role of non-state actors in enhancing pre-2020 ambition. Sub-national actors, such as cities and provinces, are often well positioned to take meaningful action, particularly in the near term.
- The United States is working with a number of other countries and organizations, including ICLEI, to advance recognition of sub-national actors at the UNFCCC. This work is expected to include a high-level event at COP 20 and ongoing work to advance and support ambitious action at the state and city levels.
- We propose the launch of a platform that brings together subnational actors, the private sector, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for ambitious action under the convening power of the UNFCCC (and other relevant fora). This platform could capture subnational and private sector pledges, identify opportunities for collaboration and leveraging of existing initiatives, and develop a set of concrete technical initiatives and deliverables that could be implemented in advance of the 2015 COP that would be designed to showcase real world solutions to climate change and contribute towards a more ambitious outcome at all levels in 2015.