

Session SBI46 (2016)

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Multilateral assessment
Questions and answers
United States of America

[Question by](#) European Union at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Additional policies for 2025

With regard to the NDC, the United States noted in its BR2 the likely need for additional policies and measures to meet it.

- Which are the priority actions currently undertaken in order to reach this target for 2025?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

We note that issues pertaining to post-2020 action are outside the scope of Multilateral Assessment.

[Question by](#) European Union at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Additional measures

The 'existing measures' scenario reported by the United States in its BR2 includes the effects of all PaMs that had been implemented or adopted up to mid-2015 under the President's Climate Action Plan 2013, but does not include additional reductions resulting from any further measures that may be formulated or implemented from mid-2015 to 2025. The 'additional measures' (WAM) scenario includes planned PaMs that have been proposed, but not finalized, and other measures that fall under the initiatives laid out in the President's Climate Action Plan 2013. According to the projections provided, the 17% reduction target in 2020 would only be reached with such additional measures.

- Could the US provide information regarding the steps taken to ensure targets for 2020 can be met?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

The Administration is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness.

Question by European Union at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 28 February

Title: Impacts of mitigation actions

According to the information provided in the BR2, in 2013, the United States' GHG emissions including LULUCF were 5,791,223.73 kt CO₂ eq, an approximate 10.0 per cent reduction below the 2005 level.

- Could the US provide additional information on how its mitigation actions to-date have had an impact on emissions reductions?
- Please could the US provide additional information on how believes its future implementation of actions will ensure it achieves its targets?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

On the first question, in 2015, net U.S. greenhouse gas emissions were 6,112.9MMT CO₂ Eq., or 11.5% below 2005 levels. On the second question, the Administration is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness.

Question by Japan at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 28 February

Title: Performance standards for passenger car

What level of performance standards does U.S. expect in the future for cars?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

Current EPA GHG emission standards for light-duty automobiles extend through model year

2025. The national program for GHG and fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles (passenger cars and trucks) was developed jointly by EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The standards were established in two phases: Phase 1 - Model years 2012 - 2016; and Phase 2 - Model years 2017 - 2025. Together the final standards are projected to result in an average industry fleet-wide level of 163 grams/mile of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in model year 2025, which is equivalent to 54.5 miles per gallon (mpg) (if achieved exclusively through fuel economy improvements). EPA has announced its intention to reconsider the Final Determination of the Mid-Term Evaluation of GHG standards for model year 2022-2025 light-duty vehicles. This could result in a revision to the GHG standards for model year 2022-2025.

Question by Japan at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 28 February

Title: Research and development of clean energy

According to p.21-22 of the BR2, the U.S. is actively investing in research and development of clean energy and it has gotten excellent results. What is important to effectively invest in research and development of clean energy?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

Effective investment in research and development (R&D) requires a clear understanding of research needs, gaps and opportunities, knowledge of technical barriers, innovative models for carrying out R&D, and engagement of business and industry.

Question by China at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 28 February

Title: HFC emission

The U.S. has implemented, adopted and planned several measures to mitigate HFC emission, nevertheless, fast increases in HFC emission have been projected in both WEM and WAM scenarios. Could the Party provide information on the drivers for those increasing trends?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

There are several factors that, combined, lead to an increase in HFC emissions in the with existing measures scenario. In the near term, the most immediate driver of increasing emissions is the turn-over of equipment currently operating on ozone-depleting substances. Modeling suggests that this equipment will be replaced mostly with HFC-containing equipment. Also, we expect that as the U.S. economy and population grow, so will the use of HFC-containing equipment. This increase will affect HFC emissions. For any particular product category, this growth will lead to a larger stock of equipment using high-GWP HFCs in the near term, but low-GWP HFCs or other options in the long term. For many product categories, we do expect, and did model, an increasing use of lower-GWP options; however, the expected rise in use will reduce the effects from that transition to lower-GWP options.

Question by China at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 28 February

Title: scenarios assumptions of the LULUCF sector

Could the U.S. provide information on the assumptions for high and low sequestration scenarios of LULUCF sector?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

As discussed on page 32 of BR2, the LULUCF projections through 2030 are presented as a range to capture how different modeling approaches produce different results and to reflect uncertainties. The BR2 LULUCF projections reflect a synthesis of modeling results developed via a multi-year effort between the U.S. Forest Service and the Environmental Protection Agency using different models. Utilizing different models allows for a more robust range of projections by representing different perspectives on future macroeconomic outlooks and forest characteristics and management trends. The 2016 BR low sequestration projection estimate was from a U.S. Forest Service land use and forest dynamics modeling effort, which used USDA baseline macroeconomic information and accounted for forest growth, disturbance, and aging to generate future estimates of U.S. forest carbon levels. As discussed on BR2 page 32, the low sequestration results were driven by high population growth, related land use conversion from forest to urban uses, and housing start expectations. The combined effects result in an overall slowing of forest carbon sequestration rates. The high sequestration projection range provided by EPA used a dynamic intertemporal optimization forestry model, the Global Timber Model (GTM). GTM projects potential future timber resource conditions and carbon implications using detailed biophysical

and economic forestry data globally. The high sequestration estimates were largely driven by the Annual Energy Outlook macroeconomic parameters, resulting in rising global market prices and related investments in U.S. forested lands. As BR2 page 33 highlights, these higher prices stimulated slightly increasing forest area and moderated US harvests thus increasing carbon stocks.

[Question by](#) China at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) consideration of the international market mechanism

According to the projections reported in BR2, the U.S. needs to take additional measures to achieve their 2020 targets. Given that President Trump is not supportive of President Obama's Climate Actions plan, it is even more challenging to achieve the 17% emission reduction in 2020 purely through domestic actions. Does the U.S. have any plan or preliminary thoughts on using international market mechanism to accommodate recent changes? If still not, what additional measure will the U.S. consider to take to achieve the 2020 target?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

On the first question, no. On the second question, the Administration is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness.

[Question by](#) China at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) the WAM scenario

In the U.S. BR2, according to the projection, only the WAM scenario enables U.S. to achieve the 2020 target. Could the U.S. identify the most important additional measures included in the WAM scenario? Could the U.S. explain the range of projected 2020 emission in the WAM scenario?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

Some of the measures included in the WAM scenario are described on pages 36-38 of BR2. The WAM range (as seen in figure 6) illustrates the uncertainty surrounding the potential emission outcomes that can be directly influenced by implementation of additional measures. The WAM policy range presented in Figure 6 is applied on top of the LULUCF optimistic sink projection to illustrate the range of potential net emission outcomes under the WAM scenario.

[Question by](#) China at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) the CPP

Clean Power Plan is among the most important mitigation actions of the President's Climate Action Plan 2013. Although the Party has explained that the estimated mitigation impact was not reported because the Plan is expected to start delivering emission reductions after 2020, it is believed that the anticipation of full implementation of CPP will have significant impacts on the electricity market and relative investment choices before 2020. Has the U.S. prepared any alternative approaches to mitigate emission of electricity sector in case the CPP is canceled?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

The Administration is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness.

[Question by](#) China at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) the President's Climate Action Plan 2013

Among the various components of the President's Climate Action Plan 2013, could the U.S. explicitly list those have been approved by the Congress and also those issued by the President's executive orders?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

We note that the Administration rescinded the 2013 Climate Action Plan on March 28, 2017. As a general matter, Congress enacts laws, and the executive branch issues regulations and executive orders.

[Question by](#) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Impact of policy announcements since the BR

What assessment have you carried out of the impact of policy announcements made since the publication of your BR?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

We do not have updated information.

[Question by](#) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Additional measures scenario

Please can you provide more information about the policy assumptions which are included in the additional measures scenario as described in Annex 2 of the BR – including a list of policies included in the assumption, with their contributions?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

We do not have additional information to share beyond that reported on pages 36-38 of the BR and the *Methodologies for Current Measures and Additional Measures* contained in Appendix 2.

[Question by](#) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at Tuesday, 28 February 2017

[Category:](#) Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Estimating the impact of policy

The USA reports impacts of individual mitigation measures in CTF3 of the BR2 but uses a different method to estimate the overall impacts of policy. Has work been undertaken to reconcile the outcomes of these two different types of analysis and, if so, could the USA provide information on the methodology and the outputs of the reconciliation?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

No specific effort was made to reconcile results across the economy-wide and policy-specific analyses. General efforts were made to improve the characterization of policies in economy-wide models and to improve the estimation of impacts from individual policies and measures.

[Question by](#) Brazil at Monday, 27 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Additional measures

The US GHG Emission Reduction Target for 2020 is in the range of 17% below 2005 levels. In page 36, the US states that “emissions under the 2016 Current Measures scenario are expected to be 13–15 percent below 2005 levels in 2020”. In the same page there is the following: additional measures projections “have the potential to bring emissions to 22–27

percent below 2005 levels in 2025". Does it mean that only adopting additional measures the 2020 target will be achieved?

In page 39 the US states that "future administrations or Congress have further options on the table that they can exercise to bring us to, or beyond, the upper range of our target". What are the commitment to put the additional measures in place?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

On question one, the U.S. does not have updated projections, and is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness. However, a number of factors contribute to emissions trends. U.S. emissions have been declining in recent years even as GDP has continued to grow. Our most recent GHG inventory shows that our 2015 emissions were 11.5% below 2005 levels.

On question two, the Administration is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness.

[Question by](#) Brazil at Monday, 27 February 2017

[Category:](#) All emissions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) GHG emissions projected - 2020

Regarding table 6(a) "Information on updated greenhouse gas projections under a 'with measures' scenario", could the US please explain why the GHG emissions projected for 2020 in BR2 are below to those projections contained in BR1 (totals with and without LULUCF)?

[Answer by](#) United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

The projected emissions presented in the "with measures" scenario in table 6(a) of BR2 reflect policies implemented and adopted in the two years between the two analyses, and

updated data and modeling. The projection methodologies are similar to those used in the previous report, with the exception of the improved data and modeling described in the section “Updates to Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry Methodology” on page 31 of BR2. The U.S. notes that is reviewing existing policies and regulations in the context of a focus on strengthening U.S. economic growth and promoting jobs for American workers, and will not support policies or regulations that have adverse effects on energy independence and U.S. competitiveness.

[Question by Brazil](#) at Monday, 27 February 2017

[Category:](#) Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Appendix 3: U.S. Policies and Measures - Lessons learned and barriers

Regarding “Appendix 3: U.S. Policies and Measures”, a significant number of mitigation actions was listed. Congratulations for that. However, there are some mitigation impacts not estimated. Please, inform the reasons for not doing so. What are the difficulties?

[Answer by United States of America](#), Friday, 28 April 2017

The quantitative impacts of some of the policies and measures listed in BR CTF Table 3 were not modeled or otherwise estimated individually by the implementing agencies for the year 2020. There are a number of reasons why an agency may have chosen not to calculate these impacts, including, inter alia, data availability, and uncertainty related to commercial and economic trends and fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.

[Question by Brazil](#) at Monday, 27 February 2017

[Category:](#) Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

[Type:](#) Before 28 February

[Title:](#) Appendix 3: U.S. Policies and Measures - 2013/2020

Regarding “Appendix 3: U.S. Policies and Measures”, are there any methodological difference between estimates of mitigation impacts related to 2013 and those related to 2020?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

Methodologies for estimating the GHG emission reductions for individual policies and measures, as summarized in Appendix 3, are contained in the document, *Second Biennial Report Methodologies for Quantified Policies and Measures*. In some cases, the method for estimating 2013 GHG emissions reductions may differ from the method for projecting 2020 GHG emissions reductions. For example, 2013 emissions reductions may be based on reported historical information while 2020 projections are based on an estimation method, which may incorporate historical data and other parameters. Where the methods differ for 2013 and 2020, such differences are specified in the description of the methodology for a given policy or measure.

Question by Brazil at Monday, 27 February 2017

Category: Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 28 February

Title: "Appendix 3: U.S. Policies and Measures"

Regarding "Appendix 3: U.S. Policies and Measures", the most updated estimates of mitigation impacts are those related to 2013, which is the most updated historical GHG emissions year.

What are the methodological reasons for that?

What are the links between estimates of mitigation impacts and GHG Inventory?

Answer by United States of America, Friday, 28 April 2017

Each government agency determined the methodology it used to estimate mitigation impacts. See the document entitled, *Second Biennial Report Methodologies for Quantified Policies and Measures*, for more details. The GHG inventory reflects the actual impacts of mitigation measures, but it doesn't attribute those impacts to individual policies or measures.

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