



Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

Thirty-eighth session

Bonn, 3–14 June 2013

Item 8(a) of the provisional agenda

Impact of the implementation of response measures

Forum and work programme

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Impact of the implementation of response measures

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Report on the in-forum workshop on area (h)

Note by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies

Summary

This report presents the outcome of the in-forum workshop on area (h) of the work programme on the impact of the implementation of response measures, “Building collective and individual learning towards a transition to a low greenhouse gas emitting society”, which was held on 28 November 2012 at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar. The workshop provided an opportunity for Parties and relevant organizations to exchange information, experiences, best practices and views in relation to the impact of the implementation of response measures. Such information, experiences and views will serve as input to the relevant discussions of and consideration by the subsidiary bodies, in particular when conducting the review of the work of the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures at their thirty-ninth sessions, with a view to providing recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its nineteenth session, as mandated by decision 8/CP.17.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by decision 8/CP.17, adopted a work programme on the impact of the implementation of response measures (hereinafter referred to as the work programme) and modalities for its operationalization, under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), with the objective of improving the understanding of the impact of the implementation of response measures in eight areas.¹

2. The COP, by the same decision, established a forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures (hereinafter referred to as the forum), to be convened by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, to implement the work programme.

3. At their thirty-sixth sessions, the SBI and the SBSTA requested² the secretariat to support, under the guidance of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, the implementation of the work programme. In response to that request, an in-forum workshop on area (h) of the work programme, “Building collective and individual learning towards a transition to a low greenhouse gas emitting society”, was organized.

B. Possible action by the subsidiary bodies

4. The subsidiary bodies may wish to take note of the information contained in this report when conducting the review of the work of the forum, including the need for its continuation, at their thirty-ninth sessions, with a view to providing recommendations to the COP at its nineteenth session, as mandated by decision 8/CP.17.

II. Proceedings

5. The in-forum workshop referred to in paragraph 3 above was held at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar, on 28 November 2012 and was co-chaired by Mr. Tomasz Chruszczow, Chair of the SBI, and Mr. Richard Muyungi, Chair of the SBSTA. It was attended by 82 participants representing Parties, international organizations, research institutions and the private sector.

6. The workshop was divided into four parts, namely:

- (a) Overview presentation by an expert;
- (b) Information, experiences, best practices and views presented by Parties;
- (c) Information, experiences, best practices and views presented by organizations;
- (d) Concluding remarks made by Parties.

7. The in-forum workshop agenda and the presentations made are available on the UNFCCC website.³

¹ Decision 8/CP.17, paragraph 1.

² FCCC/SBI/2012/15, paragraph 167.

³ <<http://unfccc.int/7113>>.

A. Overview presentation

8. The overview presentation made by a consultant, Mr. Aaron Cosbey, set the scene for sharing information and views relating to the transition to low greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting societies, including a reference to decision 1/CP.16, which mentions a low-carbon society, and guiding questions to facilitate the discussions and to help understand what building a low-carbon society means in the context of the impact of the implementation of response measures. In decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 10, the COP realized that addressing climate change requires a paradigm shift towards building a low-carbon society that offers substantial opportunities and ensures continued high growth and sustainable development, based on innovative technologies and more sustainable production and consumption and lifestyles, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work and quality jobs. The following guiding questions were proposed by the presenter:

- (a) What measures are governments using to make the transition to a low GHG emitting society?
- (b) Which of those measures have impacts?
- (c) Of what kind and magnitude are the impacts?
- (d) Which impacts should governments focus on as a priority?
- (e) What are the best practices in pursuit of a low GHG emitting society?
- (f) Are there other measures that would be as effective, with fewer such impacts?

B. Information, experiences and views presented by Parties

9. A number of Parties expressed the need for the parameters of the discussion to be clarified, noting, for example, that the concept of a low GHG emitting society has yet to be clearly defined. Others were less concerned in that regard and were ready to discuss area (h) of the work programme, even in the absence of a rigorous definition within the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol.

10. A representative of the Group of 77 and China presented information and views on the discussion. The group felt that the transition to a low GHG emitting society needs to be undertaken in the context of the principles of the Convention, such as common but differentiated responsibilities. The presenter cited a number of articles of the Convention, including Article 3, paragraph 5, and Article 4, paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, and others, as relevant to the discussion. She noted the need to consider possible negative impacts of response measures on developing countries, in order to ensure that, in making the transition to low GHG emitting societies, no burden is put on developing countries.

11. Continuing to refer to the relevant provisions of the Convention, the presenter also noted ways in which its implementation supports sustainable development, which relates to the reduction of carbon emissions. The Convention affirms that responses to climate change should be coordinated with social and economic development in an integrated manner, with a view to avoiding adverse impacts on developing countries, taking fully into account the legitimate priority needs of developing countries for their achievement of sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty. In addition, it recognizes that the largest share of historical and current global emissions of GHGs originated in developed countries, that per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low and that the share of global emissions originating from developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs.

12. Furthermore, the Convention recognizes that all countries, especially developing countries, need access to the resources required to achieve sustainable social and economic development and that, in order for developing countries to progress towards that goal, their energy consumption will need to grow, taking into account the possibilities for achieving greater energy efficiency and for controlling GHG emissions in general, including through the application of new technologies.

13. The workshop participants stressed the importance of exchanging experiences, information and knowledge and of ensuring access to affordable technologies for developing countries in order for them to implement their nationally appropriate mitigation actions and national adaptation programmes of action. In addition, there is a need to assess the role of intellectual property rights related to the terms of transfer of technology.

14. While supporting the views presented by the Group of 77 and China, a representative of the African States made a statement on behalf of the group in which she highlighted many of the issues that make it difficult for Africa to undertake measures for the transition to low GHG emitting societies. Some of the issues mentioned were: poverty, unemployment, social infrastructure, access to water, electricity and sanitation. The presenter stressed that making the transition to a low GHG emitting society will be costly for Africa and will require a mix of finance, such as public concessionary finance, public-private financing, green bonds, grant aid and foreign direct investment, as well as climate change technologies, including sustained technology transfer and diffusion.

15. In the statement, unilateral border carbon adjustments, being contemplated by a number of developed countries, were mentioned as an example of a measure that will have a devastating impact on African countries and will compound the challenges faced by them during their transition to a low GHG emitting society. In addition, it was indicated that the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules on climate change are unclear and inadequate to address the current challenges due to climate change. There is a need for WTO to negotiate new rules that include the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries. However, the African States felt that such a process can take place only after the current negotiations within the UNFCCC process have advanced sufficiently and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities has been incorporated into the outcomes of the negotiations.

16. The representatives of South Africa and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) presented a number of good examples of activities that their governments are in the process of undertaking to make the transition to low GHG emitting societies. Some findings from studies on possible relevant policies that could be implemented were also presented. The representative of South Africa informed the workshop participants about the steps being taken by his country in formulating and implementing strategies to deal with climate change, including those that will lead to a low GHG emitting society. The following were indicated as means of reducing GHG emissions:

- (a) Green building and construction regulations and practices;
- (b) Local government programmes;
- (c) Improving the efficiency of public transportation systems;
- (d) Allocating resources to research and development;
- (e) Exploiting manufacturing opportunities arising from preferential local procurement;
- (f) Skills development and training;
- (g) Active marketing efforts;

- (h) Effective monitoring, reporting and verification.

17. Some of the achievements due to the implementation of the activities mentioned in paragraph 16 above are expected to include: 56,000 MW in new electricity generation capacity required by 2030, with over 20,000 MW being obtained from renewable sources; the Energy Efficiency Strategy set as a national target of 12 per cent by 2015; a voluntary 15 per cent target for the reduction of final energy demand by industry; and an appliance-labelling programme launched for domestic appliances, such as refrigerators.

18. The presenter mentioned some of the country's highlights in terms of achieving energy efficiency through building regulations, such as:

- (a) The new building regulations published in 2010, supporting the government's energy strategy;

- (b) The guidelines for reducing the energy requirements of residential and non-residential buildings;

- (c) Minimum requirements for: glazing, insulation, shading, orientation and building services, hot water, lighting, etc.;

- (d) The Energy Efficiency Building Regulations, which stipulate that new buildings have to be equipped with:

- (i) Solar water heaters, heat pumps or similar technologies;

- (ii) Ceilings, walls and windows which meet minimum requirements for preventing heat loss and gain;

- (iii) Energy-efficient heating, air conditioning and mechanical ventilation systems;

- (e) The development of the solar water heaters sector, which produced 158,175 units that were installed under the Eskom rebate programme in 2011/2012;

- (f) The organization of the transport sector so as to reduce fuel consumption, which will lead to reduced GHG emissions, by means of, for example, the Public Transport Strategy for modal upgrading and the establishment of integrated rapid public transport networks, including rapid bus transit in metropolitan areas.

19. The representative of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) narrated many examples of how his country is making the transition to a low GHG emitting society, with the objective of developing a far-reaching and inclusive power generation sector, while considering the reduction of GHG emissions, by pursuing the modification of consumption patterns. Furthermore, initiatives are being undertaken to promote the rational and efficient use of electrical power in generation, transformation, transport, distribution and marketing processes.

20. He stressed the need to change current non-sustainable patterns of production and consumption, including by fostering education on the matter. The following actions were mentioned as specific initiatives being undertaken to reduce GHG emissions:

- (a) Investment in public transportation systems, such as electric buses, cable cars, and new and expanded subway and train systems;

- (b) The development of a legal and institutional framework to support the rational and efficient use of electrical power;

- (c) The promotion of incentives to support access to energy in a sustainable manner, which includes:

- (i) The publication of minimum standards and labelling norms, taking into consideration performance and environmentally friendly technology;
 - (ii) The replacement of energy-inefficient technology and equipment (air conditioning, bulbs and refrigerators), representing an average annual reduction of 0.282 million tonnes of carbon dioxide and an energy saving of 30 MW;
 - (d) The reduction of energy consumption through the installation of solar panels in remote, isolated and border areas;
 - (e) Investment in alternative energy sources, such as wind farms;
 - (f) The promotion of land-use initiatives – 60 per cent of the country comprises 222 protected areas, including national parks, biosphere reserves and wildlife reserves, among others, managed by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources.
21. A representative of Saudi Arabia informed the workshop participants that striving to achieve a low-carbon society in a developing country should take into consideration the country's development imperatives, including: eradicating poverty, sustainable economic growth, access to sustainable and affordable modern energy services, promoting innovation, and technology development, transfer and dissemination.
22. He reiterated the need to differentiate between Parties included and not included in Annex I to the Convention and to ensure a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs.
23. In terms of ideas for the way forward, he felt that Parties should:
- (a) Implement decisions 5/CP.7, 1/CP.10 and 31/CMP.1;
 - (b) Further evaluate and clarify the concept of a low GHG emitting society;
 - (c) Disseminate technology and help to build capacity on the basis of national priorities;
 - (d) Promote awareness, education and training;
 - (e) Share experiences in the development of measures and methodologies aimed at increasing economic resilience.

C. Information, experiences and views presented by organizations

24. A representative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development noted that a large share of the global GHG emissions is known to be originating from infrastructure plants, particularly in the energy sector. She emphasized the need to define the role of the private sector in providing investments in low-carbon technologies, particularly for climate-resilient infrastructure.
25. She called on governments to provide enabling factors to facilitate the transition to a low GHG emitting society by creating a pool of low-carbon, climate-resilient project opportunities, to improve the risk–return of low-carbon, climate-resilient projects and to use public sources of finance to mobilize private-sector finance. In addition, an approach that integrates climate and finance policies was considered necessary.
26. She highlighted that choices made on infrastructure today lock in future levels of emissions and the resilience of economies for decades or more, particularly in view of the growing demand for energy in developing countries over the next 50 years. These kinds of developmental changes require the participation of multiple stakeholders and knowledge about the positive and negative impacts of the different strategies to be adopted.

27. The workshop participants advocated providing tailored intervention in the case of specific challenges as a key role for governments so as to guarantee sustainable development. Specific country contexts, including resources, capacity and access to finance, provide evidence that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution, although there are common steps that can be taken in the effort to share views on sustainable development.

28. The following were seen as barriers to private-sector engagement in low-carbon, climate-resilient infrastructure:

- (a) The lack of adequate commercially viable low-carbon, climate-resilient projects;
- (b) An insufficient risk/return value proposition versus carbon-intensive options;
- (c) The lack of availability of long-term finance for green infrastructure projects.

29. A representative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) presented information and views on behalf of her organization, including examples of activities undertaken to facilitate the transition to a low GHG emitting society and what can be done internationally as a way forward.

30. With regard to the activities undertaken by ITUC and its affiliates to facilitate the transition, she mentioned: the development of policies; investment plans; and promoting virtuous employment opportunities (decent and environmentally friendly), thereby helping to eradicate poverty, create employment and protect the environment.

31. The workshop participants were informed about the study conducted by ITUC of 12 countries, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), which focused on research initiatives for identifying and anticipating employment challenges as a consequence of emission reduction measures. Affiliates of ITUC also undertook a demand-based assessment of skills gaps, which can be barriers to workers accessing new, sustainable employment opportunities. A number of joint ITUC activities for ‘greener workplaces’ have taken place in Argentina, Brazil, Malaysia, South Africa, Uganda and Uruguay, to mention but a few.

32. She proposed that the following activities could be undertaken at the international level, including through the forum:

- (a) Collecting practices and methodologies for assessing the consequences for employment of response measures;
- (b) Identifying public policies that have been designed to counter negative impacts on jobs or to multiply positive impacts;
- (c) Assessing the kind and amount of investment needed to support the transformation of the economic sector, as well as the potential sources of investment;
- (d) Collecting good practices for domestic interaction on this issue with relevant stakeholders, including workers and representatives.

33. It was suggested that activities under the work programme should be in collaboration with other relevant processes relating to employment, for example reinforcing the links with ILO. The representative of ITUC announced the upcoming discussions organized by ILO (the International Labour Conference to be held in June 2013) on green jobs and sustainable development, which will provide an opportunity to identify the roles and responsibilities of governments, employers and trade unions in the transition towards sustainability. She felt that the outcome of those discussions will provide input to the work programme.

34. In his presentation, the representative of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries noted that learning is an important aspect of capacity-building and recalled that this has already been recognized in decisions of the COP. He highlighted that there is a need for structured and institutionalized actions to enhance collective and individual learning, particularly in defining what is to be learned, the way to achieve this and how to disseminate the knowledge.

35. He observed that the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol are dynamic multilateral processes that have a significant influence on the transition to a low GHG emitting society. They should therefore aim at building a win-win outcome that ensures the transition to a low GHG emitting society and at the same time avoids or minimizes the negative impact of response measures on developing countries.

36. He pointed out that it was widely recognized by all participants in the discussions that a dialogue mechanism such as the forum is an important channel for Parties and relevant stakeholders to advance the understanding of best practices and their positive and negative impacts.

37. He highlighted the importance of implementing Article 4, paragraphs 8 and 9, of the Convention and decisions 2/CP.7 (on capacity-building), 5/CP.7 (on adaptation and response measures), 1/CP.10 and 31/CMP.1.

38. He posed the following questions aimed at seeking clarity on the concept of making the transition to a low GHG emission society:

- (a) On collective learning:
 - (i) What is to be learned?
 - (ii) How is it to be learned? By trial and error?
 - (iii) Informed and guided by science?
 - (iv) How should this be managed? etc.;
- (b) On individual learning:
 - (i) Who are the individuals? Is it Parties?
 - (ii) Social groups? Or sectors?
 - (iii) What learning modality will be needed and by whom? etc.;
- (c) On a low GHG emitting society:
 - (i) What are the attributes of a low GHG emitting society? Are they universal?
 - (ii) How should learning be matched to address those attributes?

III. Concluding remarks made by Parties

39. A number of Parties reiterated the need to ensure that any transition to a low GHG emitting society is guided by the principles of the Convention, including common but differentiated responsibilities. They argued, in line with the basic foundations of the work programme, that the burden of climate change mitigation should not be shifted onto developing countries, especially the least developed countries.

40. There was general agreement that any transition will inevitably have some negative impacts. All economic change has winners and losers, in particular a fundamental global change. Therefore, what is required is to manage the transition – to achieve a just transition.

The negative effects on developing countries and on workers in affected sectors should be minimized.

41. Several Parties lamented the lack of progress of the negotiations on these matters, even after many years. The slow progress was attributed to the lack of adequate institutions. There was a feeling that, although the forum is a good start, there is a need to think about creating other institutions. There was concern that the concept of a low GHG emitting society is not defined anywhere in the Convention, and therefore, for some countries, with their high share of renewables and their progress in decreasing deforestation, it is not a question of a transition to a low GHG emitting society, but rather a question of maintenance.

42. The importance of public awareness was emphasized by a number of workshop participants, if the world is to realize the transition. However, Parties took note of the challenges posed by industrial policies.

43. One workshop participant disagreed with the notion that more institutions are needed, as she felt that the process is already highly institutionalized, citing the new additions, including in relation to finance, capacity-building and technology transfer, as well as the forum. It was emphasized that there is a need to continue to make use of the existing channels.
