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Reports on other activities

**Annual report on the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories
of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention**

Annual report on the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This report provides information relating to greenhouse gas inventory reviews conducted in the 2014 and 2015 review cycles, including the selection of experts and lead reviewers and the composition of the expert review teams, and the plans for the 2016 review cycle. It also provides information on review training activities under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, the meeting of inventory lead reviewers and progress made in updating the roster of experts and revising the standardized data comparisons, tools and other materials used in the reviews.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat to prepare an annual report on greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory review activities, including any recommendations resulting from the meetings of lead reviewers (LRs) participating in the technical review of GHG inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties), for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).¹ The COP and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) also requested the secretariat to include in this report information on the inventory review training programme, in particular on examination procedures and on the selection of trainees and instructors in order to allow Parties to assess the effectiveness of the programme.² In addition, the SBSTA requested the secretariat to include in this report information on progress made in updating the roster of experts.³

2. More recently, the COP requested the secretariat to report annually to the SBSTA on the composition of expert review teams (ERTs), including the selection of experts for the review teams and the LRs, and on the actions taken to ensure the application of the selection criteria for ERTs. As also requested by the COP, the annex contains the collective annual report to the SBSTA prepared at the 12th meeting of inventory LRs, containing suggestions on how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews.⁴

3. The COP further requested the secretariat to include in this report any revised set of the standardized data comparisons, for consideration by the SBSTA, as well as information on the development of new and revised review tools and materials that support the tasks of the ERTs.⁵

B. Scope of the note

4. This report provides information on activities relating to GHG inventory reviews conducted in the 2014 and 2015 review cycles and the plans for the 2016 review cycle.⁶

5. This report focuses on the elements of the review process that are specific to the Convention and should be read in conjunction with the “Annual report on the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories and other information reported by Parties included in Annex I as defined in Article 1, paragraph 7, of the Kyoto Protocol”.⁷ The lessons learned and problems encountered in the review process under the Convention have many elements in common with those encountered in the reviews under the Kyoto Protocol.

¹ Decision 12/CP.9, paragraph 10.

² For the COP request, see decision 12/CP.9, paragraph 11; for the reiterated request, see decision 14/CP.20, paragraph 3. The CMP request is in decision 8/CMP.5, paragraph 3.

³ FCCC/SBSTA/2006/5, paragraph 95.

⁴ Decision 13/CP.20, annex, paragraphs 40, 44 and 78.

⁵ Decision 13/CP.20, paragraph 6, and decision 13/CP.20, annex, paragraphs 44 and 78.

⁶ For the 2015 review cycle, information is only available up to 9 November 2015.

⁷ FCCC/SBSTA/2015/INF.10.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

6. The SBSTA will be invited to take note of this report and to provide any relevant guidance to the secretariat on the selection of experts and the coordination of the ERTs, and to the ERTs on the expert review process.⁸

II. Review activities

7. The GHG inventory review activities, along with some activities for the training of review experts and the organization of LR meetings, are funded from the UNFCCC core budget. Some other related activities, such as refresher seminars for experienced reviewers, the strengthening of the secretariat's capacity to support review and training activities, and the development of the GHG information system, continue to be funded through voluntary contributions to supplementary funds.

Individual inventory reviews

1. 2014 annual review cycle

8. In 2014, two in-country reviews and 10 centralized reviews (three reviews covering three Parties each and seven reviews covering four Parties each), covering a total of 39 Annex I Parties, were conducted. No desk reviews were conducted. The reports on these reviews were published between 10 December 2014 and 10 July 2015.⁹ Table 1 shows information about the 2014 review cycle and the publication dates of each review report.

9. There have been delays in the preparation and publication of review reports observed in the 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 review cycles.¹⁰ However, the efforts to improve timeliness based on the relevant recommendations from the LRs have started to show effect: in the 2011 cycle, only 8 review reports were published within one year of submission, whereas 16 were published in 2012, 22 in 2013, and 26 in 2014. Notwithstanding this positive trend noted by the LRs (see annex, para. 29), further efforts to publish reports in a timely fashion are required.

Table 1

2014 review cycle, including publication dates of annual review reports

| <i>Party</i> | <i>Review week dates (review type and number)</i> | <i>ARR publication date (weeks after review week)</i> |
|--------------|---|---|
| Australia | 1–6 September 2014 (CR1) | 12 January 2015 (19) |
| Austria | 8–13 September 2014 (CR3) | 7 April 2015 (30) |
| Belarus | Not subject to individual inventory review | NA |
| Belgium | 8–13 September 2014 (CR3) | 14 April 2015 (31) |

⁸ Decision 13/CP.20, annex, paragraph 53.

⁹ The published review reports are available at <<http://unfccc.int/8452>>.

¹⁰ For more information on the delays in the 2010 review cycle, see document FCCC/SBSTA/2011/INF.13, paragraphs 9–11; for the 2011 review cycle, see document FCCC/SBSTA/2012/INF.10, paragraphs 9–14; for the 2012 review cycle, see document FCCC/SBSTA/2013/INF.8, paragraphs 9–11; for the 2013 review cycle, see document FCCC/SBSTA/2014/INF.17, paragraphs 9–12; for the 2014 review cycle, see paragraph 8 and table 1 in this report.

| <i>Party</i> | <i>Review week dates (review type and number)</i> | <i>ARR publication date (weeks after review week)</i> |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Bulgaria | 22–27 September 2014 (CR7) | 14 April 2015 (29) |
| Canada | 6–11 October 2014 (ICR2) | 23 April 2015 (28) |
| Croatia | 22–27 September 2014 (CR7) | 15 June 2015 (38) |
| Cyprus | Not subject to individual inventory review | NA |
| Czech Republic | 22–27 September 2014 (CR8) | 13 April 2015 (29) |
| Denmark | 1–6 September 2014 (CR1) (CR1) | 4 February 2015 (22) |
| Estonia | 22–27 September 2014 (CR7) | 10 April 2015 (29) |
| European Union | 29 September–4 October 2014 (CR10) | 10 July 2015 (41) |
| Finland | 1–6 September 2014 (CR1) | 4 February 2015 (22) |
| France | 22–27 September 2014 (CR8) | 4 March 2015 (23) |
| Germany | 8–13 September 2014 (CR3) | 28 April 2015 (33) |
| Greece | 15–20 September 2014 (CR5) | 11 December 2014 (12) |
| Hungary | 22–27 September 2014 (CR9) | 30 December 2014 (14) |
| Iceland | 8–13 September 2014 (CR4) | 29 June 2015 (42) |
| Ireland | 8–13 September 2014 (CR4) | 8 April 2015 (30) |
| Italy | 15–20 September 2014 (CR5) | 3 March 2015 (24) |
| Japan | 29 September–4 October 2014 (CR10) | 23 June 2015 (38) |
| Kazakhstan | Not subject to individual inventory review | NA |
| Latvia | 1–6 September 2014 (CR2) | 13 March 2015 (28) |
| Liechtenstein | 15–20 September 2014 (CR6) | 13 April 2015 (30) |
| Lithuania | 22–27 September 2014 (CR9) | 21 January 2015 (17) |
| Luxembourg | 15–20 September 2014 (CR6) | 12 May 2015 (34) |
| Malta | Not subject to individual inventory review | NA |
| Monaco | 22–27 September 2014 (CR8) | 6 February 2015 (20) |
| Netherlands | 15–20 September 2014 (CR5) | 10 December 2014 (12) |
| New Zealand | 8–13 September 2014 (CR3) | 3 June 2015 (38) |
| Norway | 22–27 September 2014 (CR9) | 13 May 2015 (33) |
| Poland | 22–27 September 2014 (CR8) | 20 March 2015 (26) |
| Portugal | 15–20 September 2014 (CR6) | 7 May 2015 (33) |
| Romania | 22–27 September 2014 (CR9) | 2 March 2015 (23) |
| Russian Federation | 8–13 September 2014 (CR4) | 5 June 2015 (39) |
| Slovakia | 22–27 September 2014 (CR7) | 28 May 2015 (35) |
| Slovenia | 29 September–4 October 2014 (CR10) | 6 February 2015 (19) |
| Spain | 15–20 September 2014 (CR6) | 13 April 2015 (30) |
| Sweden | 15–20 September 2014 (CR5) | 3 March 2015 (24) |
| Switzerland | 1–6 September 2014 (CR2) | 30 December 2014 (17) |
| Turkey | 8–13 September 2014 (ICR1) | 18 February 2015 (23) |
| Ukraine | 8–13 September 2014 (CR4) | 3 July 2015 (43) |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and | 1–6 September 2014 (CR2) | 2 March 2015 (26) |

| <i>Party</i> | <i>Review week dates (review type and number)</i> | <i>ARR publication date (weeks after review week)</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Northern Ireland | | |
| United States of America | Not subject to individual inventory review | NA |

Abbreviations: ARR = annual review report, CR = centralized review, ICR = in-country review, NA = not applicable.

2. 2015 annual review cycle

Annual submissions

10. Between 15 April 2015 and 9 November 2015, the secretariat received submissions on GHG inventories from 35 Parties (see table 2). Of these Parties, 23 submitted both a national inventory report (NIR) and the common reporting format (CRF) tables, 4 submitted an NIR only and 8 submitted the CRF tables only.

11. The CRF tables of the submission should be prepared using the CRF Reporter software. Following the adoption of the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual greenhouse gas inventories” (annex to decision 24/CP.19) (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines), the CRF Reporter software had to be redesigned. Decision 13/CP.20 recognized that the June 2014 deadline for providing the redesigned version of this software to Annex I Parties,¹¹ enabling them to submit their CRF tables, was not met and that the CRF Reporter version available at that time (version 5.0.0) was not functioning. Accordingly, decision 13/CP.20 reiterated that Annex I Parties in 2015 may submit their CRF tables after 15 April 2015, but no longer than the corresponding delay in the CRF Reporter availability.

12. In order to enable Parties to start the preparation and compilation of their GHG inventories, the UNFCCC secretariat put a phased recovery plan in place that follows the steps of the GHG inventory compilation process, and made available five successive releases of the software, in January, March, April, May and September 2015. These releases addressed the issues relating to performance, data entry, data aggregations and the correct display of data in the CRF tables.¹² The UNFCCC secretariat has actively collaborated with Parties on resolving the remaining issues with the software. As a result of those efforts, a large number of Annex I Parties were able to submit CRF tables of the 2015 inventory submissions, as shown in table 2. In order to further enhance the display of data in the CRF tables, as well as to allow Parties to report on recalculations starting from their 2016 submissions, another release is planned for the end of November 2015.

¹¹ June 2014, as set out in decision 24/CP.19, paragraph 5.

¹² The status of the CRF tables as produced by the CRF Reporter as at 4 September 2015 is shown in the ‘mark-up tables’ available at <https://unfccc.int/files/national_reports/annex_i_ghg_inventories/national_inventories_submissions/application/vnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.spreadsheetml.sheet/mark-up_with_kplulucf_reporting_tables_in_v_5_10_0_4sep2015.xlsx>. The tables show, in particular, where all known key issues have been resolved and where further residual work is still required.

Table 2
2015 submission of greenhouse gas inventories and review dates and type

| <i>Party</i> | <i>Submission dates</i> | | <i>Review dates (review type and number)</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| | <i>NIR</i> | <i>CRF tables</i> | |
| Australia | 27 May 2015 | 27 May 2015 | 14–19 September 2015 (ICR1) |
| Austria | 5 November 2015 | 5 November 2015 | NA |
| Belarus | | | NA |
| Belgium | 5 November 2015 | 5 November 2015 | NA |
| Bulgaria | 6 November 2015 | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Canada | 17 April 2015 | 17 April 2015 | 12–17 October 2015 (CR1) |
| Croatia | 6 November 2015 | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Cyprus | | | NA |
| Czech Republic | | 9 November 2015 | NA |
| Denmark | | 7 November 2015 | NA |
| Estonia | 2 November 2015 | 2 November 2015 | NA |
| European Union | | | NA |
| Finland | 30 October 2015 | 3 November 2015 | NA |
| France | 4 November 2015 | 4 November 2015 | NA |
| Germany | | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Greece | | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Hungary | | | NA |
| Iceland | | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Ireland | | 4 November 2015 | NA |
| Italy | 3 November 2015 | 3 November 2015 | NA |
| Japan | 23 April 2015 | | NA |
| Kazakhstan | 28 October 2015 | 13 October 2015 | NA |
| Latvia | 6 November 2015 | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Liechtenstein | | | NA |
| Lithuania | 6 November 2015 | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Luxembourg | | | NA |
| Malta | 6 November 2015 | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Monaco | | | NA |
| Netherlands | 2 November 2015 | 5 November 2015 | NA |
| New Zealand | 10 April 2015; 31 July 2015 | 31 July 2015 | 28 September–3 October 2015 (DR1) |
| Norway | | | NA |
| Poland | 6 November 2015 | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Portugal | 3 November 2015 | 3 November 2015 | NA |
| Romania | | | NA |
| Russian Federation | | 30 August 2015 | NA |

| Party | Submission dates | | Review dates (review type and number) |
|--|------------------|-----------------|--|
| | NIR | CRF tables | |
| Slovakia | | 6 November 2015 | NA |
| Slovenia | 3 November 2015 | 3 November 2015 | NA |
| Spain | 5 November 2015 | 5 November 2015 | NA |
| Sweden | 29 October 2015 | 5 November 2015 | NA |
| Switzerland | 27 April 2015 | | NA |
| Turkey | 9 November 2015 | | NA |
| Ukraine | 14 August 2015 | 14 August 2015 | 12–17 October 2015 (CR1) |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 30 October 2015 | 30 October 2015 | NA |
| United States of America | 14 April 2015 | | NA |

Notes: (1) Blank cells indicate that no submission had been received as at 9 November 2015. Some Parties, such as Cyprus, Luxembourg, Norway, Romania, Turkey and the United States of America, submitted their CRF tables after 9 November 2015; such submissions could not be reported on in this document. (2) The European Union and its member States that had not submitted their CRF tables as at 9 November 2015 (Cyprus, Hungary, Luxembourg and Romania) have communicated to the secretariat that they plan to submit their inventory submissions prior to the start of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties. Once these submissions have been made, they will be available on the UNFCCC website at <<http://unfccc.int/8812>>.

Abbreviations: CR = centralized review, CRF = common reporting format, DR = desk review, ICR = in-country review, NA = not applicable, NIR = national inventory report.

Organization of reviews and composition of expert review teams

13. In accordance with the “Guidelines for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories, biennial reports and national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part III: UNFCCC guidelines for the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” (annex to decision 13/CP.20) (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines), the inventory review process is conducted in two stages: initial assessment by the secretariat, which results in status reports and assessment reports, and individual review by ERTs, which results in annual review reports. In accordance with decisions 12/CP.9 and 14/CP.20, new experts who have taken the training courses for reviews under the Convention and have passed the corresponding examinations can participate in an ERT.¹³

14. The initial assessment stage provides an immediate quality assessment aiming to verify that the inventory submission is consistent, complete and timely, and its format correct. As at 9 November 2015, status reports for five submissions had been prepared and published on the UNFCCC website.¹⁴ Preparation of the remaining status reports is in progress. Assessment reports provide a preliminary assessment of the inventory of an individual Party and identify any potential inventory problems, which are then assessed

¹³ For more information on the training of review experts, see chapter V of document FCCC/SBSTA/2013/INF.8.

¹⁴ <<http://unfccc.int/8812>>.

during the individual review stage. Assessment reports are not published but are provided to the ERTs for further assessment.

15. For the 2015 review cycle, the secretariat coordinated the review of four GHG inventory submissions through one in-country review (for Australia), one desk review (for New Zealand) and one centralized review (covering Canada and Ukraine) (see table 2). As at 9 November 2015, the preparation of the reports for these reviews was under way.

16. In 2015, the secretariat invited 38 experts to participate in the reviews, 11 of whom declined on account of being unavailable owing to previous commitments, a heavy workload, a lack of financial resources or other reasons. In addition, four experts informed the secretariat of their availability on dates other than the scheduled review dates on which they were invited to participate, or of their availability only on particular dates, which introduced additional challenges for the planning of the reviews.

17. In selecting members of ERTs, the secretariat seeks to ensure an overall balance in the number of experts from Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties and a geographical balance within these two groups. In the 2015 review cycle, a total of 27 individuals from 22 Parties served as inventory experts on review teams. Of these experts, 13 were from non-Annex I Parties, four from Annex I Parties with economies in transition and 10 from other Annex I Parties.

18. Between 2000, when the individual reviews were first conducted during the trial period, and 2015, 458 individual experts from 100 Parties (41 Annex I Parties and 59 non-Annex I Parties) had participated in GHG review activities.¹⁵

19. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the participation of experts by nominating Party in 2015. As indicated in paragraph 15 above, fewer reviews than usual took place during the 2015 review cycle. The demand for experts was therefore not as high as in earlier review cycles, making the situation illustrated in table 3 exceptional and not representative in terms of the overall requirement for experts and the regional distribution of the experts who participate in reviews.

Table 3

Number of inventory review experts participating in the 2015 review cycle by nominating Party

| <i>Annex I Parties</i> | | <i>Annex I Parties with economies in transition</i> | | <i>Non-Annex I Parties</i> |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------|----------------------------|
| Australia – 1 | Japan – 1 | Bulgaria – 1 | Benin – 1 | Mongolia – 1 |
| Belgium – 1 | New Zealand – 1 | Poland – 1 | Brazil – 2 | San Marino – 1 |
| Canada – 1 | Sweden – 1 | Russian Federation – 2 | China – 4 | South Africa – 1 |
| Denmark – 1 | United States of America – 1 | | Costa Rica – 1 | Swaziland – 1 |
| Finland – 1 | | | Ethiopia – 1 | |
| Greece – 1 | | | | |

20. When inviting experts to participate as LRs, the secretariat seeks to ensure an overall balance in the number of experts from Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties and a geographical balance within these two groups. It also takes into consideration the experts' experience in the preparation and management of GHG inventories, previous participation

¹⁵ These totals do not include 12 observers who participated in the reviews between 2000 and 2008.

in reviews, technical expertise in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) sectors and successful completion of the training courses. In 2015, a total of six individuals from six Parties served as inventory LRs. Of these experts, three were from non-Annex I Parties and three from Annex I Parties (of which none were from Annex I Parties with economies in transition).

21. For centralized reviews, the secretariat usually invites two review experts to cover each sector and two generalists to cover cross-cutting issues. In order to incorporate new reviewers into the ERTs, for the centralized review conducted in 2015 the secretariat invited three experts for each of the following sectors: energy; industrial processes and product use; and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). In accordance with the conclusions of the 11th meeting of inventory LRs, the secretariat ensured that no LULUCF expert acted as an LR.

22. The secretariat continues to reinforce ERTs for centralized reviews with new review experts. In 2015, three new experts, who had taken the training courses and passed the examinations, participated in the centralized review assuming full responsibility as reviewers with some support from LRs and experienced reviewers.

23. The secretariat will continue to make every effort to further improve the timeliness of the review reports during the 2015 review cycle while maintaining the required quality level.

3. 2016 annual review cycle

24. As of 15 April 2016, Annex I Parties will submit their GHG inventories in accordance with the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines. These inventories will be reviewed according to the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines.

25. It is expected that the key issues that delayed or prevented the submissions for 2015 (see para. 11 above) will be resolved by the end of November 2015 and that the submission and review processes for 2016 will proceed smoothly.

26. The secretariat will organize the review of the 2016 GHG inventory submissions under the Convention for all Annex I Parties in the third quarter of 2016. Moreover, the 2015 GHG inventory submissions from Annex I Parties that did not undergo a review in 2015 will need to be reviewed. Guidance on how to address that need will be sought from the SBSTA.

III. Meeting of inventory lead reviewers

27. The 12th meeting of GHG inventory LRs was held in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 3 March 2015. A total of 37 experts from non-Annex I Parties and 45 experts from Annex I Parties were invited to the meeting. Of the 62 experts who attended, 29 were from non-Annex I Parties and 33 from Annex I Parties; in addition, two members of the Bureau of the Compliance Committee attended the meeting as observers. After the meeting, on 4 March 2015, the secretariat held a refresher seminar for LRs and experienced reviewers attended by 61 experts (28 from non-Annex I Parties and 33 from Annex I Parties). The refresher seminar focused on the transition to the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines, the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines, the *IPCC 2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance Arising from the Kyoto Protocol* and the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands* (hereinafter referred to as the Wetlands Supplement).

28. In accordance with decisions 13/CP.20, 22/CMP.1 and 24/CMP.1, the meeting facilitated the LRs' task of ensuring the consistency of reviews across Parties and provided

conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the quality and efficiency of the reviews. Such conclusions and recommendations are reported to the SBSTA,¹⁶ in accordance with the annexes to decisions 13/CP.20 and 22/CMP.1, in order to provide the SBSTA with input for providing further guidance to the secretariat on the selection of experts and the coordination of the ERTs and the expert review process. In addition, decision 13/CP.20 stipulates the provision of guidance from LRs on matters such as review tools, materials and templates, as well as suggestions on how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews.

IV. Roster of experts and availability of nominated experts

29. As at 28 August 2015, the UNFCCC roster of experts contained 1,050 GHG inventory experts, 539 from non-Annex I Parties and 508 from Annex I Parties. Since August 2014, some Parties updated their part of the roster, nominated new experts and deleted obsolete records; however, the roster still contains a great deal of unrevised data. The roster from which the secretariat could select eligible experts to participate in GHG inventory reviews currently contains only 443 experts that have taken the mandatory examinations of the relevant training programmes. It is very important that a sufficient number of available experts be nominated by Parties, and that the nominations on the roster be regularly updated and that those experts be readily available. Taking account of this situation, and following the decisions of the COP and the CMP and subsidiary bodies conclusions, the secretariat invited in April 2015 national focal points to nominate new experts who can actively participate in the processes indicated above, to regularly check and, where necessary, update the information on experts already nominated to the roster, and to remove experts from the roster who are no longer available for cooperation with the secretariat.

30. As a result of the issues described in paragraph 29 above, a limited number of experts listed on the roster currently participate in the review process. One of the main reasons for the significant discrepancy between the number of nominated experts and the number of those participating in reviews is that only a few Parties regularly update the list of experts nominated by them to reflect, inter alia, the fact that many experts on the roster have moved to other positions or have retired and are no longer available. However, another important reason is the significant workload of the nominated experts at their respective offices, increased by their participation in international climate change negotiations and related activities, which prohibits most of them from devoting time to the annual review activities. This problem has been exacerbated in recent years and seems unlikely to be resolved as climate change negotiations and activities continue to intensify. Another reason is that some experts nominated to the roster have not yet taken the mandatory training courses or have not passed all the relevant examinations for both the training programme for reviews under the Convention and the training programme for reviews under the Kyoto Protocol (see chapter V below). Therefore, only a limited number of experts on the roster are currently able to participate in the review process.

31. According to the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines, Parties may submit their NIRs in any of the official languages of the United Nations. The UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines also encourage Parties to submit, where relevant, an English translation of their NIR. Submitting NIRs in a language other than English limits the transparency of Parties' reporting and puts an additional burden on the secretariat to process the information provided and find review experts with knowledge of that language

¹⁶ See the annex for the conclusions and recommendations from the 12th meeting of inventory LRs.

in addition to English, which is the working language of the secretariat. Given the limited number of review experts, especially those with sufficient knowledge of languages other than English, selecting a team capable of working in a language other than English is a major challenge. The review becomes limited if the ERT does not have knowledge of the language in which the NIR was submitted, as it cannot review in depth the information submitted, including any additional information provided in the language of the Party under review. In addition, many experts have to review the same Parties' submissions year after year because of their language skills, reducing the valuable perspective and expertise gained by different experts reviewing the inventory in successive years, and limiting to a certain extent the scope and focus of the review activities. Further, these experts are not able to use their experience and contribute to the review of other Parties' submissions. These issues are especially relevant to the case of centralized reviews.

32. The secretariat continued to make an online form available on the UNFCCC website to facilitate the nomination of experts to the roster and the updating of the list of nominees and of their information by Parties.¹⁷ At the same time, it continued to process the nominations of experts received via e-mail and fax to further facilitate nominations by Parties. The secretariat has also improved the accessibility and user-friendliness of the information on the training programmes on the UNFCCC website and updated its contents with the latest developments.¹⁸ In 2015, through individual letters, the secretariat invited Parties to update the roster and to nominate new experts in connection with the organizing of training courses for new GHG inventory review experts, ensuring that Parties without experts participating in the review process were invited.

33. In 2015 the secretariat initiated the development of a new software platform for the UNFCCC roster of experts with the objective of developing an integrated information management and communication solution that would allow for the efficient management and assessment of the nomination of experts for all review and analysis processes and the updating of information by national focal points, the selection of experts for various training processes and the tracking of information and the allocation of review experts and technical experts to the different review and analysis processes under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. This new software platform is expected to be fully available by mid-2016.

V. Training of experts

34. Training activities are of crucial importance for ensuring the required quality and consistency of the review process. Such training is particularly valuable for experts from non-Annex I Parties, who need to further strengthen their expertise because most do not work on GHG inventories on a daily basis. In addition, they are not involved in the activities of Annex I Parties related to the reporting of supplementary information under Article 7, paragraph 1, of the Kyoto Protocol, on, for example, emissions and removals from activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol, information on accounting of Kyoto Protocol units, the national systems and the national registries and their changes, and information on the minimization of adverse impacts in accordance with Article 3, paragraph 14, of the Kyoto Protocol, which are subject to annual reviews. One of the positive impacts of the training programmes is that experts, from non-Annex I and Annex I Parties alike, participating in training activities and subsequent reviews could use the experience gained in these activities to improve the quality of their national inventories.

¹⁷ See <http://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/roster_of_experts/application/msword/new_form_as_of_19_may_2014_clean_version_for_the_web._docx.doc>.

¹⁸ See <<http://unfccc.int/2763>>.

35. The secretariat continues to strongly encourage and invite all available experts listed in the UNFCCC roster of experts nominated for GHG inventory review activities to take the relevant Convention and Kyoto Protocol training courses and examinations because only experts having passed these examinations are able to participate in the reviews under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. The secretariat also facilitates the process of access by experts to the relevant training programmes, periodically invites Parties to nominate new experts for the training programmes (see paras. 29 and 32 above) and provides relevant information and updates on the organization of the training courses on the UNFCCC website¹⁹ and through other electronic means, such as the secretariat's newsletter.

A. Training programme for experts for the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention

36. The basic training course, developed and offered since 2003 in accordance with decision 12/CP.9, was completed in 2005 with a LULUCF sector module. Since 2009, in accordance with decision 10/CP.15, the secretariat implemented and offered to new GHG inventory review experts the updated training programme for GHG inventory review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories from Annex I Parties, which was updated to take into account the methodological developments in GHG inventories and experience gained in the review process.

37. Decision 14/CP.20, adopted at the end of 2014, requested the secretariat to implement the "Training programme for review experts for the technical review of GHG inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention", which includes the examination of experts, and to give priority to organizing an annual training seminar for the basic course, as well as to organizing an annual refresher seminar for experienced GHG inventory review experts, subject to the availability of resources. It also encouraged Annex I Parties in a position to do so to provide financial support for the implementation of the training programme. The basic course of the training programme provides a comprehensive introduction to the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines, an overview of the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines, guidance on procedures and approaches for the technical review of GHG inventories, general IPCC inventory guidance with the application of the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the 2006 IPCC Guidelines) and detailed information on the specific aspects of the review of the IPCC inventory sectors.

38. In accordance with decision 14/CP.20, the basic course of the training programme was for the first time formally offered online in September 2015 and consists of: the overview course covering the general and cross-cutting review issues and general IPCC methodological guidance; the five sectoral courses on the review of all IPCC inventory sectors; the course on improving communication and in facilitating consensus in ERTs; and the course on the review of complex models and higher-tier methods.

39. The basic course facilitated by instructors was offered online in September and October 2015 with three instructors available to provide guidance and respond to questions from the trainees, and concluded with a three-day training seminar with examinations. At the training seminar, which took place in Bonn from 27 to 29 October 2015, the trainees participated in a simulated centralized review using real annual GHG inventory submissions over two and a half days. On the last half day, they took the corresponding written examinations for the overview course and the sectoral course completed online. The secretariat invited as instructors three highly experienced LRs and skilled GHG inventory

¹⁹ <<http://unfccc.int/2763>>.

review experts from non-Annex I Parties from three different regions. All three instructors were experienced LRs selected for their recognized capabilities and extensive experience in such training activities. All instructors were on the UNFCCC roster of consultants.²⁰

40. In 2015, for the first training cycle, a total of 69 invitations were sent to new experts on the roster who had been nominated by Parties without review experts participating in the review process, in accordance with decision 14/CP.20.²¹ Of those experts, 33 participated in the online training courses and training seminar. The results of the mandatory examinations taken during the training seminar will be available in November 2015.

41. In addition to organizing the basic course of the training programme facilitated by instructors (see paras. 38 and 39 above), the secretariat has made the basic course available online (without instructors) to experienced inventory experts (available since late September 2015). In this regard, and in accordance with decision 14/CP.20, the secretariat invited 289 LRs and experienced reviewers to take the basic course online and to sit for the relevant examinations. The secretariat plans to organize examinations for these experts during COP 21 and during the inventory LR meeting in early 2016.

42. Since June 2012, the secretariat has offered the course on the review of complex models and higher-tier methods online. In early 2012, the secretariat invited more than 300 experienced and new experts to take the course. Of those experts, 119 have been registered and have requested access to the course. In addition, since 2012 new experts participating in the online training courses have also been invited to take, and have been provided access to, this course on an optional basis. To date, 25 experts have passed the optional examination.

43. In 2015, the secretariat organized a half-day refresher seminar in conjunction with the 12th meeting of inventory LRs on the “Transition to the new UNFCCC reporting and review guidelines for GHG inventories, and the IPCC Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance arising from the Kyoto Protocol, including the IPCC Wetland Supplement”, in which 61 experienced experts (28 from non-Annex I Parties and 33 from Annex I Parties), including LRs, participated. The main objective of this seminar was to provide an overview of the transition to the new inventory reporting and review guidelines and the 2006 IPCC Guidelines, and of the methodological guidance provided in the *IPCC 2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance arising from the Kyoto Protocol*, including the Wetlands Supplement. Review experts and LRs benefited from the refresher seminar, which addressed issues and difficulties related to the new reporting and review framework under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol to ensure that experts share the knowledge and information required for reviews in 2015 and beyond.

B. Training programme for members of expert review teams participating in annual reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol

44. Decision 24/CMP.1 requested the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to develop and implement the training programme for members of ERTs participating in the initial reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol, including the testing of experts and the provision of final seminars for the courses. The courses covered important aspects for the review of the initial reports, such as national systems, the application of adjustments and modalities for the accounting of assigned amounts under Article 7, paragraph 4, of the Kyoto Protocol. These courses have been offered online to experts since 2006. The

²⁰ See <<https://unfccc.int/secretariat/employment/consultancy.html>>.

²¹ Decision 14/CP.20, annex, paragraph 10.

majority of experienced experts at that time completed the training courses and passed the mandatory examination online in the same year.

45. By decision 8/CMP.5, the CMP requested the secretariat to develop and implement the updated training programme for members of ERTs participating in annual reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol, including the examination of experts. The training programme is intended to train members of ERTs for the review of information submitted under Article 7 of the Kyoto Protocol. All training courses are designed to be offered online, in some cases with the support of an instructor, subject to the availability of resources, and in the case of the course on the application of adjustments, the support of an instructor is mandatory. The courses and examinations were offered online three to four times a year until 2011, but since 2011 they have been offered twice a year owing to the small number of participants. All courses are available, without an instructor, to trainees throughout the year.

46. This training programme was developed on the basis of the existing courses implemented in accordance with decision 24/CMP.1; some are mandatory for all reviewers, while some are mandatory for LRs and some other experts qualified for the review of particular aspects of the information submitted under Article 7 of the Kyoto Protocol. The training programme consists of a course on each of the following aspects: national systems; application of adjustments; modalities for the accounting of assigned amounts under Article 7, paragraph 4, of the Kyoto Protocol; review of national registries and information on assigned amounts; and review of activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol.

47. During the period 2010–2013, 396 experts participated in the online training courses and 319 experts passed one or more the online examinations. In May–June 2014, the secretariat organized a first round of online training courses and examinations with the participation of 23 experts; 19 experts passed two or more examinations. The secretariat organized a second round of online training courses and examinations from November 2014 to January 2015 for new experts who passed examinations under the Convention in 2014 and complemented it with courses and examinations for new and experienced experts in April–May 2015. A total of 57 experts participated in the online examinations for these two training rounds and 51 experts passed one or more exams. As at 21 September 2015, 443 experts had passed two or more examinations and were qualified to be members of ERTs participating in annual reviews under Article 8 of the Kyoto Protocol. In 2010, one highly experienced expert (an LR) from a non-Annex I Party was invited to be the instructor for the course on the application of adjustments. For the period 2011–2013, another highly experienced expert (also an LR) from a non-Annex I Party received such an invitation. In 2014, two highly experienced experts, also LRs, from non-Annex I Parties were invited to be instructors, one for the course on the application of adjustments and one for the course on the review of activities under Article 3, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Kyoto Protocol.

VI. Review tools and materials

48. Support to the reporting and review processes requires a number of information technology systems, which differ in purpose, scope, size and degree of support. These systems vary from extensive, complex databases, such as the Locator tool, to smaller, focused ‘review tools’ serving particular analytical purposes in the review process.

Greenhouse gas data warehouse and review tools

49. In 2006, the secretariat developed and put in place a data warehouse to manage the storage and management of data related to GHG inventories and submissions. This

complex software and database system is needed to enable the processing of extensive sets of GHG data reported by Annex I Parties, and it allows the generation of key reports and review tools through the use of the GHG data interface. The data warehouse is currently being upgraded to reflect the changes stemming from the revised reporting and review inventory guidelines, and to address technology obsolescence issues. The upgrade is a major, challenging IT project being undertaken by the secretariat.

50. As outlined at the 12th meeting of inventory LRs (see the annex, paras. 15 and 16), the data warehouse upgrade is necessary not only for the GHG data interface and the production of streamlined aggregate GHG information, but also for the redesign of the existing review tools. This update covers all the existing review tools such as the GHG Locator, the Statistical Outlier Detection Tool, the Submission Comparison Tool and the Recalculation Data Analysis Tool. The development is in progress and the secretariat plans to present the updated review tools, generated using the upgraded data warehouse, to the LRs for testing in time for the 13th meeting of inventory LRs, to be held in early 2016.

Aggregate information on greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks

51. The secretariat has been requested²² to compile and tabulate aggregate information and trends concerning GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks from the latest available GHG inventory submissions of Annex I Parties, and any other inventory information, and to publish this information on the UNFCCC website as well as in a stand-alone document. The compilation of information and trends concerning GHG emissions requested in decision 13/CP.20 compares basic inventory information, such as emission trends, activity data and implied emission factors, across Parties and over time. In addition to including this information in the “Aggregate information on greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks for Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” document,²³ this information will be made available in the GHG data interface from 2016.

Greenhouse gas data interface

52. The GHG data interface is an online portal on the UNFCCC website²⁴ that allows public access to GHG data reported by Parties under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. This interface is currently being upgraded, as mandated at SBSTA 38,²⁵ following the adoption of the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines. This upgrade is being undertaken together with the data warehouse overhaul. However, the financial resources received to date have been insufficient to complete the necessary changes.

Standardized set of data comparisons

53. Decision 13/CP.20 requested the secretariat to develop and implement a standardized set of data comparisons and to include information on those data comparisons in this report.²⁶ Information on the standardized set of data comparisons was presented at the 12th meeting of inventory LRs. The LRs emphasized the need for experience in the use of the new guidelines before being able to adequately consider the standardized set of data comparisons (see the annex, para. 15).

²² Decision 13/CP.20, paragraph 8.

²³ FCCC/WEB/AGI/2015.

²⁴ The GHG data interface is available at <<http://unfccc.int/3800>>.

²⁵ FCCC/SBSTA/2013/3, paragraph 121.

²⁶ Decision 13/CP.20, paragraphs 4 and 6.

Annex

Conclusions and recommendations from the 12th meeting of greenhouse gas inventory lead reviewers held in Bonn on 2 and 3 March 2015

1. The 12th meeting of greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory lead reviewers (LRs) was held in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 3 March 2015. A total of 37 experts from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 45 experts from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) were invited to the meeting. Of the 62 experts who attended, 29 were from non-Annex I Parties and 33 were from Annex I Parties; in addition, two members of the Bureau of the Compliance Committee attended the meeting as observers. The secretariat held a refresher seminar for LR and experienced reviewers on 4 March 2015, after the meeting, which was attended by 61 experts (28 from non-Annex I Parties and 33 from Annex I Parties). The focus of the refresher seminar was on the transition to the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part I: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on annual greenhouse gas inventories” (annex to decision 24/CP.19) (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines), the “Guidelines for the technical review of information reported under the Convention related to greenhouse gas inventories, biennial reports and national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part III: UNFCCC guidelines for the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” (annex to decision 13/CP.20) (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *2013 Revised Supplementary Methods and Good Practice Guidance Arising from the Kyoto Protocol* and the *2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands*.

2. In accordance with decisions 13/CP.20, 22/CMP.1 and 24/CMP.1, the meeting facilitated the work of LR in fulfilling their task to ensure consistency of reviews across Parties and provided suggestions on how to improve the quality and efficiency of the reviews. These conclusions and recommendations will be reported to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), in accordance with the annexes to decisions 13/CP.20 and 22/CMP.1, in order to provide the SBSTA with inputs for providing further guidance to the secretariat on the selection of experts and the coordination of the expert review teams (ERTs) and the expert review process. In addition, decision 13/CP.20 invites guidance from LR on such matters as review tools, materials and templates, as well as suggestions on how to improve the quality, efficiency and consistency of the reviews.

I. Coordination and planning of the 2015–2016 review cycle

3. The LR agreed that the 2015 review cycle will be particularly challenging for Parties, reviewers, LR and the secretariat owing to the late delivery of the CRF Reporter, the fact that there are new reporting guidelines implementing the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (hereinafter referred to as the 2006 IPCC Guidelines) and new review guidelines under the Convention, and the fact that draft decisions on reporting, review, accounting and adjustments for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol have not been adopted.

4. The LRs took note that the reviews of the ‘true-up’¹ period reports for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will take place at the latest in February 2016, in accordance with decision 3/CMP.10. If the 2014 GHG inventory review cycle is completed by 10 August 2015, then the deadline for the submission of the true-up period reports will be 2 January 2016. The ERTs shall provide draft review reports within eight weeks from 2 January 2016, in accordance with the annex to decision 22/CMP.1. If the conclusion of the 2014 GHG inventory review cycle is delayed, then these dates will be delayed by the same amount of time.

5. The LRs noted that the report to facilitate the calculation of the assigned amount for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and the supplementary information under Article 7, paragraph 1, of the Kyoto Protocol cannot be reviewed because decisions on reporting, review, accounting and adjustments for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol have not been adopted.

6. The LRs recognized the importance of ensuring the timeliness of reviews under the Convention, in accordance with decision 13/CP.20. They noted the secretariat’s plan to deliver a functional CRF Reporter by the end of April 2015 and that this will result in a delay in the submission of the annual inventories, possibly up to February 2016.² They also noted that this may result in delaying the 2015 review process. The LRs further noted that according to paragraph 14 of decision 13/CP.20, Parties were urged to submit the information as soon as practically possible.

7. Owing to the time needed to organize review teams, the LRs noted that, depending on the submission date, it may be difficult for the secretariat to organize reviews in 2015. The secretariat informed the LRs that a review in November or December 2015 was unlikely to be practical and that three months are needed from the date of submission to the review week in order to arrange the review. The LRs requested the secretariat to communicate its plans to Parties on a regular basis.

8. In order to manage the 2015 review cycle, the LRs requested the secretariat to send questionnaires to experts and Parties, as follows:

(a) In March 2015, all reviewers should be asked about their availability for the period from August to November 2015 and about the types of review in which they are willing to participate;

(b) After the delivery of a functioning CRF Reporter, all Annex I Parties should be asked when they expect to submit their 2015 annual inventory submissions. The questionnaire should indicate the secretariat’s plans for reviews in 2015.

9. The LRs noted that there is no guidance from the SBSTA covering the issues addressed in paragraphs 5–8 above and that these issues may need further clarification from the SBSTA.

¹ “Additional period for fulfilling commitments” as defined in section XIII of the annex to decision 27/CMP.1.

² Decision 24/CP.19 (paragraph 5) requested the secretariat to make available to Annex I Parties, by June 2014 at the latest, the upgraded CRF Reporter, in order to enable them to submit their GHG inventories due by 15 April 2015. Since the CRF Reporter was not available by June 2014, in accordance with decision 24/CP.19, decision 6/CMP.9 and the reiteration in decision 13/CP.20, Parties may submit their common reporting format tables after 15 April 2015, but with a delay no longer than the corresponding delay in the availability of the CRF Reporter after June 2014. If a functioning version of the CRF Reporter is made available by the end of April 2015 as planned, the submission deadline will be delayed by 10 months after April 2015 (i.e. to February 2016).

10. The LRs agreed that desk reviews should be supported by having experienced LRs available during the review period and that the secretariat should organize teleconferences for the reviewers to discuss their reviews and any issues arising therefrom. The LRs noted that two consecutive annual submissions should not be subject to a desk review, in accordance with paragraph 63 of the annex to decision 13/CP.20.

11. The LRs agreed that the counting of the frequency of desk reviews and in-country reviews (paragraph 63 of the annex to decision 13/CP.20) continues and does not restart at the beginning of 2015.

II. Training and availability of review experts

12. The LRs welcomed the information on training activities undertaken by the secretariat in 2014 and on ongoing and planned training activities in 2015 provided by the secretariat, including the organization of online courses under the new “Training programme for review experts for the technical review of greenhouse gas inventories of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention” (annex to decision 14/CP.20) (hereinafter referred to as the new training programme). The LRs urged the secretariat to make these courses available online as early as possible, but no later than September 2015.

13. The LRs strongly encouraged LRs and experienced reviewers to undertake the basic course of the new training programme and the relevant examinations.

14. In order to continue increasing the number of review experts who can actively participate in reviews with the support of their Parties, the LRs stressed the importance of nominating experts with experience in GHG inventories and robust sectoral technical expertise to the UNFCCC roster of experts, and encouraged Parties to continue nominating experts and regularly updating the roster. The LRs also encouraged Parties to ensure that experts are fully available for the complete review process and required training activities.

III. Guidance on the development of review tools, materials and templates

15. The LRs noted the development of the data warehouse, including existing review tools and the production of aggregate GHG information. In order to streamline the aggregate GHG information, the LRs recommended deleting tables with limited relevance. They also recommended that the secretariat circulate a questionnaire to experienced reviewers and compile the results, in order to support an informed discussion and possible recommendations on this issue at the 13th meeting of LRs. The LRs emphasized the need for experience in the use of the new guidelines before being able to adequately consider the standardized set of data comparisons.

16. The LRs noted that the secretariat is redesigning the review tools in line with the recommendations resulting from the 11th meeting of the LRs. The functionality of the tools remains unchanged while they are being integrated into the new data warehouse. The LRs recommended that a group of LRs be involved in the testing of the updated tools, and that, for any future development of the review tools, the LRs be involved in the prioritization, scheduling and design of these improvements. The user manuals should include an example for a single country.

17. The LRs recommended that the Locator tool be made publicly available.

18. The LRs noted that a questionnaire sent to reviewers on the inventory virtual team room (i-VTR) found that it still had problems; hence, they recommended that improvements to its usability and user-friendliness be made, while ensuring that its use is

more efficient than that of existing approaches. The LRs also recommended that the secretariat develop a communication tool in accordance with the annex to decision 13/CP.20.

Annual review report template

19. The LRs welcomed the draft new annual review report (ARR) template produced by the secretariat to reflect the updated UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines (decision 13/CP.20) by, in particular, including standardized tables whenever possible, not repeating information in those tables in the text, and not extensively duplicating information already publicly available. The LRs believe that the new ARR template is a good improvement and will be clearer, improve the quality assurance (QA) process and speed up the review process.

20. The LRs welcomed the opportunity to provide comments on the draft new ARR template and encouraged all LRs to review it and submit comments to the secretariat by the end of March 2015. They requested the secretariat to produce a final version of the ARR template by the end of June 2015.

21. The LRs noted that the draft new ARR template presented during the meeting reflects only elements of review under the Convention and that the new ARR template will need to be further modified to reflect any agreement on reporting and review under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

22. The LRs agreed that ERTs should be careful in considering recommendations made in the 2014 review cycle to ensure that those recommendations are still relevant given the new UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines, the new UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines and the use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines.

23. With regard to issues identified in three successive reviews, in accordance with paragraph 83 of the annex to decision 13/CP.20, the LRs agreed that the ERTs should consider recommendations and reiterations of recommendations contained in the 2014 ARR that are still relevant after the revision of the UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines and the UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines in the counting of reiterations of these findings for inclusion in a prominent paragraph in the ARR.

IV. Improvements to the quality, efficiency and consistency of reviews, in accordance with decision 13/CP.20

24. The LRs requested the secretariat to continue practices that have contributed to improvements in the reviews during the 2014 review cycle, in particular to:

- (a) Consult with Parties to agree on review dates;
- (b) Organize ERTs as early as possible;
- (c) Ensure that at least one LR does not have sectoral responsibilities;
- (d) Ensure that ERTs have a sufficient number of experienced experts (centralized/in-country reviews);
- (e) Provide materials, templates and review tools early.

25. The LRs noted the new, shorter, 20-week deadline for the finalization of the ARR. In order to meet this deadline, the LRs agreed that:

(a) Clear guidance to the ERT should be provided well in advance of the review week;

(b) Early preparations by the ERT will be needed, including preparing preliminary questions for the Party and compiling potential key issues related to completeness, accuracy and status of implementation of previous recommendations no later than two weeks prior to the review;

(c) ERTs should be aware that they are making a commitment to finalizing the report after the review week and to devoting the necessary time, especially in the two to four weeks after the review week, to accomplish this.

26. The LRs noted that it will be particularly important for LRs, ERTs and the secretariat to identify and document possible consistency issues arising from the use of the new UNFCCC Annex I inventory reporting guidelines and UNFCCC Annex I inventory review guidelines, as well as in relation to the conduct of desk reviews, for consideration at future meetings of LRs.

27. The LRs were concerned about the time spent on the QA process in previous reviews. They noted the secretariat's planned QA procedures for the technical review of the GHG inventories of Annex I Parties and recommended that the secretariat document the procedures and update existing QA and quality control checks in accordance with the plan. The LRs also noted that the new ARR template may reduce the time needed for QA and encouraged the secretariat to make further efforts to reduce the time needed for QA.

28. The LRs further noted that the ERTs, LRs, Parties and the secretariat all have a role to play in ensuring the overall quality of the published ARRs.

V. Statistics and follow-up to the 11th meeting of the lead reviewers

29. The LRs noted improvement in the timeliness of the publication of the review reports in the 2014 review cycle compared with in previous cycles. Some of this improvement is due to improved preparation before the review week. They noted that as at 31 December 2014 four reports had been published, and that as at 2 March 2015 there were 13 published review reports (33 per cent of all 2014 ARRs), and stressed the need for ERTs and the secretariat to respond quickly in the weeks following the review (see also paras. 14, 25 and 27 above and 33 below).

30. The LRs noted that, compared with the 2013 review cycle, in which 172 experts participated in the review activities, the number of experts participating in the review cycle decreased to 161 in 2014, reflecting the reduced number of reviews and in-country reviews. However, the LRs also noted that the number of reviewers per Party increased.

31. The LRs further noted that the 30 new experts that participated in the reviews in 2014 constituted one fifth of all participating experts.

32. The LRs expressed their appreciation for the support of the secretariat during the review process, which contributed to improvements in the process.

33. The LRs emphasized the importance of support for reviewers, both during the review week and before and after the review week and encouraged Parties to provide sufficient support to reviewers for the entire review cycle.

34. The LRs also encouraged the continuation of sending questionnaires to Parties (including to the inventory focal points) and review experts on the performance of the review process, in order to help guide future improvements.
