



Summary report on the multilateral assessment of Australia at the forty-fifth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The Conference of the Parties, by decision 1/CP.16, decided that developed country Parties should enhance the reporting in their national communications and submit biennial reports on their progress in achieving emission reductions. It also established a new process under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) – the international assessment and review (IAR) of emissions and removals related to developed country Parties' quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets – that aims to promote the comparability of efforts among all developed country Parties. The second round of the IAR process is to be conducted during the period 2016–2017 (the first round of the IAR process was conducted during the period 2014–2015).

2. According to the modalities and procedures for IAR specified in annex II to decision 2/CP.17, the multilateral assessment (MA), being part of the IAR process, is to be conducted for each developed country Party at a working group session of the SBI, with the participation of all Parties. The aim of the MA is to assess each Party's progress in implementation towards the achievement of emission reductions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target.

3. The second round of MA of Australia took place at a working group session during SBI 45, on 12 November 2016. Such a working group session is preceded by a three-month period of questions and answers; in the first month, any Party may submit written questions to the Party being assessed, which may respond to the questions within the remaining two months. Questions for Australia had been submitted in writing two months before the working group session by the following delegations: Brazil, China, European Union (EU), Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and United States of America. A list of the questions received and the answers provided by Australia can be found on the IAR web page for Australia.¹

¹ <<https://unfccc.int/9701.php>>.

II. Proceedings

4. The working group session was chaired by the SBI Chair, Mr. Tomasz Chruszczow and SBI Rapporteur Mr. Sidat Yaffa. Australia was represented by Mr. Patrick Suckling, Ambassador for the Environment, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

5. Mr. Suckling made an opening presentation, summarizing Australia's progress in implementation towards the achievement of emission reductions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target. Under the Convention, Australia made a commitment to reduce its cumulative greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 5.0 per cent below the 2000 level by 2020. Australia assesses its progress towards its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target using a carbon budgeting approach. As reported in Australia's second biennial report, Australia expected to exceed its 2020 target by 28 Mt of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂ eq) over its target period 2013–2020. However, Mr. Suckling announced that, according to updated projections, Australia is now expected to exceed its 2020 target by 78 Mt CO₂ eq, which includes the use of units from market-based mechanisms and units from voluntary schemes.

6. Mr. Suckling presented the key policies and measures that Australia is utilizing to achieve its 2020 target. Australia's main policy is the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF), which is a fund of 2.55 billion Australian dollars to reduce GHG emissions through reverse auctioning. He also highlighted Australia's Renewable Energy Target, which is a legislative market-based mechanism that encourages new investment in large-scale and small-scale renewable energy projects. Other key policies and measures highlighted by Mr. Suckling include Australia's National Energy Productivity Plan, which outlines actions to achieve a 40 per cent improvement in energy productivity between 2015 and 2030; the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons and support for clean energy investment.

7. The opening presentation was followed by interventions and questions from the following delegations: Canada, China, EU, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, United States of America and Zimbabwe. These questions focused on: Australia's ability to estimate the mitigation impacts of its individual mitigation actions; the likelihood of Australia achieving its 2020 target; the interaction between different agencies regarding climate mitigation; the assumptions and methodologies used in Australia's projection scenarios; reporting on forest management; Australia's safeguard mechanism; the sectors that are included in the National Energy Productivity Plan; Australia's climate mitigation policies relating to methane emissions from fossil fuel production; Australia's Renewable Energy Target projects, and the capacity development available for small island developing States. In response, Australia provided further explanations. Details can be found in the webcast of this session on the IAR web page for Australia.

8. In closing, the SBI Rapporteur reminded Australia that it can submit any other observations on its MA process within two months of the working group session, and that they will form part of its Party record for the MA. The SBI Chair thanked the delegation of Australia, all the other delegations and the secretariat for this successful MA session.
