

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

### **8<sup>th</sup> meeting of lead reviewers for the review of biennial reports and national communications of developed country Parties**

*24–26 February 2021*

1. The 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of lead reviewers (LRs) for the review of biennial reports (BRs) and national communications (NCs) of developed country Parties was held remotely<sup>1</sup> on 24–26 February 2021. A total of 134 experts were invited to the meeting. Of the 104 experts who attended the meeting, 49 were from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention and 55 from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention.
2. 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”,<sup>2</sup> the meeting addressed both procedural and technical issues relating to the review of BRs and NCs of Parties included in Annex I to the Convention with a view to facilitating the work of the LRs to ensure the consistency of reviews across Parties. In addition, the LRs were informed about the status of ongoing consultations with Parties on the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement and progress in implementing the international consultation and analysis process. The meeting was also an opportunity for the LRs to share ideas for preparing for the reviews of biennial transparency reports under the ETF.
3. The LRs noted that the Reference Manual for the Enhanced Transparency Framework, a new resource produced by the secretariat to enhance understanding of the ETF, has been made publicly available on UNFCCC website.<sup>3</sup> The LRs acknowledged the usefulness of continuing discussions on the technical expert review under the ETF at future meetings of LRs. The LRs also acknowledged that the participation of the co-lead experts for biennial update reports in meetings of LRs for the review of BRs and NCs would facilitate shared understanding of implementing technical expert reviews.

### **Experience from the review of fourth biennial reports**

4. The remote reviews continued to be challenging for Parties and the expert review teams (ERTs), in particular owing to fewer opportunities to train new experts, increased limitations in the engagement of reviewers, increased workloads for reviewers and the need to accommodate meetings across different time zones. Once the situation has normalized, the mandated format of the reviews should continue. The contribution of all experts who participated in the reviews of the BR4s is acknowledged on a dedicated page of the UNFCCC website.<sup>4</sup>
5. The LRs noted that, thanks to the commitment of the experts, the cooperation of the Parties subject to the reviews, and the mobilization of resources and optimization of the review process, most BR4 reviews were accomplished within the mandated timeline,<sup>5</sup> despite the virtual modality of the reviews. Examples of optimizing the review process include allocating more review officers to support reviews, streamlining the review report checklist, template and other tools and sharing preliminary findings with the Party during the review week.
6. The LRs took note of the background paper “Completeness and transparency assessment of information reported in technical review reports of fourth biennial reports – 2021 update” prepared by the secretariat and acknowledged that the analyses contained therein will facilitate improvements to the review process.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of the results of the analysis presented during the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs, the overall completeness and

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<sup>1</sup> Owing to the circumstances related to the coronavirus disease 2019, the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs for the review of BRs and NCs of developed country Parties had to be conducted remotely.

<sup>2</sup> Decision 13/CP.20, annex.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://unfccc.int/enhanced-transparency-framework>.

<sup>4</sup> Available at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/training-programmes-for-experts/celebrating-technical-experts#eq-19>.

<sup>5</sup> Technical review reports of 30 Parties were published within the mandated four-month timeline after the review and the technical review reports of 2 Parties were published 3 and 13 days, respectively, after the mandated timeline owing to resubmissions.

<sup>6</sup> The background paper is available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/BP\\_Consistency\\_2021Update.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/BP_Consistency_2021Update.pdf).

transparency of the information provided in the BR4s has increased compared with the BR3s and the ERT assessments in the technical review reports of the BR4s are highly consistent. The LRs noted that a number of Parties had resubmitted their BR4s as a result of preliminary findings by the ERTs communicated with Parties during the review week. The resubmissions further improved the completeness and transparency of information provided in the BRs, albeit the LRs indicated that it was challenging to respond to such resubmissions within the ERT's timeline. The LRs requested the secretariat to continue compiling the review findings, to update the analysis carried out in the background paper taking into account the results of the remaining technical reviews and to present the analysis as an input for discussion during the next meeting of LRs in the context of the update of the review practice guidance (RPG).

7. The LRs noted that acknowledging continuous improvements made by Parties and noting recurring reporting issues in their BRs would improve the comprehensiveness of technical reviews and further assist Parties in improving their reporting. The LRs requested the secretariat to prepare a proposal on how findings on continuous improvements and recurring reporting issues could be addressed for inclusion in the RPG and in the review report templates that will be used during the review of the NC8s and BR5s and present this proposal during the next meeting of LRs for their consideration.

8. The LRs requested the secretariat to prepare the RPG for 2021<sup>7</sup> by incorporating the approaches discussed and agreed at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs. These approaches include cross-cutting issues, policies and measures, projections, and provision of financial, technological and capacity-building support. The LRs agreed that the review approaches presented in the RPG 2021 should be applied by the ERTs in future reviews of BRs and NCs.

9. The LRs also requested the secretariat to continue collecting information on and analysing review-related issues raised by the ERTs during reviews of the BR4s in 2021 with a view to presenting them for discussion at the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of LRs in 2022.

## **Preparations for the reviews of fifth biennial reports and eighth national communications**

10. The LRs acknowledged the possible approaches presented by the secretariat for the technical assessment by the ERTs of the achievement of the 2020 quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets, and requested the secretariat to prepare a background paper on this matter as an input for discussion during the next meeting of LRs.

11. The LRs took note of the changes in reporting requirements to be implemented by Parties for reporting their NC8s, following the revised "Guidelines for the preparation of national communications by Parties included in Annex I to the Convention, Part II: UNFCCC reporting guidelines on national communications" (UNFCCC reporting guidelines on NCs).<sup>8</sup> The LRs requested the secretariat to update the relevant tools to be used for the reviews of the NC8s (e.g. review report template, checklist and RPG) in line with the revised UNFCCC reporting guidelines on NCs.

12. The LRs took note of the results of the comparative analysis of reporting requirements<sup>9</sup> for biennial transparency reports and BRs. The LRs acknowledged the new and different reporting requirements for biennial transparency reports compared with BRs and noted that further discussion on those requirements would be helpful in future meetings of LRs.

## **State of play in the development of the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement and the international consultation and analysis**

13. The LRs took note of the information presented by the secretariat<sup>10</sup> on the outcomes of the UNFCCC Climate Dialogues 2020, held virtually from 23 November to 4 December 2020, and acknowledged in particular that the methodological work on transparency under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical

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<sup>7</sup> The RPG 2021, when completed, will be available at <https://unfccc.int/RPG>.

<sup>8</sup> Decision 6/CP.25.

<sup>9</sup> Decision 18/CMA.1 and decision 12/CP.7, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbKImKIW39k&feature=youtu.be>.

Advice<sup>11</sup> is expected to be completed at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021.

14. The LRs also took note of the information provided by the secretariat<sup>12</sup> on the implementation of the international consultation and analysis process, which helps developing country Parties gain experience as they move to the ETF under the Paris Agreement.

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<sup>11</sup> Methodological issues under the Paris Agreement include the preparation of (1) common reporting tables for national greenhouse gas inventories; (2) common tabular format tables for tracking progress towards nationally determined contributions; (3) common tabular format tables for information on financial, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building support provided and mobilized, and needed and received; (4) outlines of the biennial transparency report, national inventory document and technical expert review report; and (5) a training programme for technical experts participating in the technical expert review.

<sup>12</sup> Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oO54F10CHDw&feature=youtu.be>.