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Summary report on the multilateral assessment of the Netherlands at the forty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The Conference of the Parties, at its sixteenth session, 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 decided to establish the international assessment and review (IAR) process under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), which aims to promote comparability of efforts among all developed country Parties.[1] According to the modalities and procedures for IAR,[2] multilateral assessment (MA) 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 MA is to assess each Party's progress in implementation towards achieving emission reductions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

2. The third round of MA of the Netherlands took place on 7 December 2018 at a working group session during SBI 49. 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 the Netherlands had been submitted in writing two months before the working group session by the delegations of: China, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and Thailand. Brazil submitted written questions one day after the deadline. A list of the questions received, and the answers provided by the Netherlands as well as the webcast of the session can be found on the IAR web page for the Netherlands.[3] The Netherlands can submit any other observations on its MA process within two months of the working group session.

[1] Decision 1/CP.16, paragraphs 40 and 44.

[2] Decision 2/CP.17, annex II.

[3] https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/reporting-and-review-under-the-convention/national-communications-and-biennial-reports-annex-i-parties/multilateral-assessment/multilateral-assessment-of-third-biennial-reports/third-multilateral-11.

II. Proceedings

3. The working group session was chaired by the SBI Vice-Chair, Mr. Naser Moghaddasi. The Netherlands was represented by Mr. Ivo de Zwaan (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of the Netherlands).

4. Mr. de Zwaan made an opening presentation summarizing the Netherland's progress towards achieving the emission reductions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target. As an European Union (EU) member State of the, the Netherlands is committed to contributing to the achievement of the joint EU quantified economy-wide emission reduction target of 20 per cent below the 1990 level by 2020. The Netherland's emission reduction target for sectors covered by the EU effort-sharing decision (i.e. sectors not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)) is 16 per cent below the 2005 level by 2020.

5. The Netherland's total GHG emissions excluding emissions and removals from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) decreased by 11.6 per cent between 1990 and 2015. The decrease in total GHG emissions can be attributed mainly to decreases in emissions from the industrial processes and product use, agriculture and waste sectors and the notable decrease in emissions from energy use in non-energy industries. Mr. de Zwaan stated that provisional estimates for 2017 also showed a continuous decrease of GHG emissions in 2017.

6. Mr. de Zwaan described a number of key policies and measures (PaMs) that were delivering GHG emission reductions in the building and transport sectors. A key issue in the buildings sector is the increase in emissions mostly from the use of natural gas for heating homes in the winter season. To stimulatePaMs to reduce emissions from the housing sector the national government and regional and local authorities have introduced subsidy schemes to deliver efficiency improvements. These include improving insulation and promoting more efficient boilers to reduce the use of natural gas. These subsidy schemes have been implemented for many decades and they change over time on the basis of lessons learned and the improved quality of insulation materials. In addition, other PaMs, such as building permits for new buildings and renovated buildings, ensure an ongoing increase in the minimum energy performance standards of buildings. Agreements between government and building societies are also used to improve the performance of social housing. The most successful measure in homes has been the replacement of single glazing with high-efficiency glass, with over 250,000 improvements undertaken.

7. The Netherlands has a target to ensure that 10 per cent of new cars are electric or hybrid by 2020. PaMs for the transport sector include a general policy of the Government entering into agreements, known as Green Deals, with organizations, which allow for a targeted acceleration towards more sustainable energy. The Ministry of Transport has entered into Green Deals with 15 organizations and regional governments and this includes a number of actions to be delivered between 2016 and 2020, such as joint actions to promote electric vehicles (EVs) and a "Formula-E team". The inclusion of the Dutch grid operator helps to ensure that the infrastructure is available for charging EVs. Financial instruments are also used to increase the uptake, of EVs and these change each fiscal year. Evidence has shown that, since 2015, there has been a noticeable increase in EV uptake with a slowdown occurring in 2018. With new plug-in models available and extended ranges of EVs, the Netherlands expects the share of EVs to continue increasing in the future.

8. The Netherlands continues to evaluate and improve its policies and consults extensively with all its stakeholders, and Mr. de Zwaan highlighted in particular its 'broad-based coalition'. This coalition ensures that stakeholders are consulted on key PaMs, including the 2030 National Climate Agreement currently in preparation. The Netherlands

aims to enhance its GHG emission reduction target to 49 per cent by 2030 compared with the 1990 level. There are five sectors as part of the coalition, with stakeholders from each sector represented, all working towards the enhanced 2030 target. Furthermore, Mr. de Zwaan outlined that the Netherlands' Parliament is currently discussing a Climate Act that aims to set an emission reduction target of 90 per cent by 2050.

9. Given that emissions from the EU ETS sectors of the Party are subject to an EU-wide cap, the Netherlands presented the projected level of emissions by 2020 from non-EU ETS sectors under the 'with measures' (WEM) and 'with additional measures' scenarios, which is 11.4 and 12.3 per cent, respectively, below the annual emission allocation for 2020. The Netherlands expects to meet the target under the WEM scenario.

10. The opening presentation was followed by interventions and questions from the following delegations: Australia, Indonesia, Japan and the United States of America. The questions related to the use of projections in implementing PaMs; the status and implications of the legal case advocating stronger federal government climate change mitigation for future planning; whether there are regulations ensuring that EV charging systems use renewable energy; and to provide an update on how the Netherlands is progressing towards the 14 per cent renewable energy goal under the Agreement for Sustainable Growth.

11. In response, the Netherlands provided further explanations. In particular, the Party explained that projections are always used to update its PaMs; for example, the projections prepared by the Netherlands were a major input to the discussions for the new 2030 climate agreement and the projections are regularly updated on the basis of experience and practice. The Netherlands outlined that since 2015 there has been an ongoing high-profile court case for the State to reduce emissions by 25 per cent by 2020. Currently the State is appealing the decision, mostly on the grounds of an objection on principle; however, the Party believes that it is in reach of achieving the 25 per cent target with additional PaMs, including implementing the phase-out of coal-fired power stations much earlier than originally planned. The Party highlighted that there was more work to do regarding renewable energy and there were challenges in meeting these targets because of the country's fairly flat geography. Currently 5–6 per cent of total energy use is from renewable energy and the aim is to increase this to 14 per cent by 2023. Offshore and onshore wind technologies are the main renewable energy technologies that the Netherlands is investigating. It highlighted that large offshore wind parks no longer require State subsidies because the cost of producing electricity from wind has declined substantially.