

Norway

Views on the SBSTA work programme on clarification of quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets for developed country Parties

May 2013

The importance of the work programme on clarification of 2020 mitigation targets

- Norway welcomes the outcome in Doha with the establishment of a work programme under the SBSTA, to continue the process of clarifying the mitigation targets of developed countries for 2020. This process is of key importance to our work, and should be given high priority. The pledges for mitigation action and targets, from both developed and developing countries, are a cornerstone of the international climate effort up to 2020. The pledges, put forward by national governments up to and after COP15, represent considerable political will and commitment to combat climate change.
- Further clarification of the mitigation targets of all Parties is important in order to reduce uncertainty about the emissions gap to the two degree target. According to the UNEP gap report, the uncertainty around the emissions gap is between 6 and 13 Gigatonnes. Thus, there is a need for further clarification of the mitigation actions and targets that have been put forward. We need more basic information related to scope and coverage, the emission reduction effect as well as factors related to actual implementation.
- The outcome in Doha resolved outstanding issues related to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. We would welcome further analysis on the effect of these decisions, on the estimated emission reductions for 2020.
- The targets and actions listed in document FCCC/SB/Inf.1/Rev.1 provide a starting point for mitigation action up to 2020. The period between now and 2020 is highly important for the two degree target, and we are currently not on track. The possibility of increased ambition from Parties is very much influenced by insight into the actions others are taking. Further clarification of the mitigation pledges will give increased transparency and build trust in this regard.
- The SBSTA work programme on clarification for the 2020 mitigation targets will explore a variety of approaches to defining and implementing such commitments. Technical and in depth discussions of the different elements and issues raised can give very valuable insights with respect to how mitigation commitments should be defined in the 2015 agreement, and what kind of common accounting rules and frameworks are needed.
- With respect to Norway's 2020 mitigation target, our commitment will be implemented under the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. We will of course be open to inform of that commitment under the SBSTA work programme.

Suggested structure for the SBSTA work programme

The work programme decided in Doha for developed country Parties aims at identifying common elements for measuring progress towards achieving the mitigation targets, and also ensuring the comparability of efforts among developed country Parties. We believe this can best be achieved through an approach where we address the elements of clarification as described in decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 5, in a systematic, stepwise and technical manner.

The work programme should address the mitigation targets as they have been presented, but in doing so, should identify options for developing common approaches and providing a necessary basis for comparability.

We suggest to structure the work programme in the following way:

1. Basic elements of clarification based on emission inventory reporting
2. Approaches to account for sources and sinks in forest and land use sectors
3. Issues related to single year targets vs multiple year targets
4. Issues related to the accounting of use of international market mechanisms to meet emission reduction obligations
5. Expected emission reductions

1. Basic elements in defining targets

The most basic elements in defining the scope of a mitigation target would be the coverage of sectors and gases, the use of GWP values and the choice of base year. All developed countries have economy-wide emission reduction targets, and for the most part, it has been clarified that this includes all sectors and all gases currently covered also under the Kyoto Protocol. However, for some countries this has not been clarified. We would expect this part of the work programme to provide the necessary overview. The information in the technical paper should be revisited, with a view to having a complete picture of these elements of the 2020 mitigation targets.

From 2015 onwards, all Annex I countries will be applying the IPCC 2006 guidelines for emission inventories for their annual emission inventories. For economy-wide emission reduction targets, this common approach to emissions reporting will give a considerable degree of comparability and should ensure common approaches to global warming potential values, coverage of gases and sectors. We suggest that experts are invited to give presentations/briefings on these issues.

2. Approaches to account for sources and sinks in forest and land use sectors

For forest and land use sectors, there are currently 3 approaches for estimating how emissions and removals contribute to meeting mitigation targets: the activity-based approach to LULUCF under the Kyoto Protocol, the land-based approach used for Convention emission reporting and the approach used in REDD+. Developed country Parties will use one of the first two. Questions that need to be addressed include:

- How do Parties intend to account for emissions and removals in this sector? Land-based or activity-based? Based on a historical base year or a forward –looking reference level? How will natural disturbances be treated?
- What are the implications of these choices for the overall emission reduction expected?
- What common elements can be identified, and what further work would be necessary?

A workshop to address these issues would be a useful start. This should allow expert participation as well as Party presentations on specific questions. Submissions from Parties and expert organizations could be a next step, building on workshop discussions.

3. Issues related to the accounting of use of international market based mechanisms to meet emission reduction obligations

Issues related to the accounting of use of international market mechanisms to meet emission reduction pledges include further clarification of:

- The plans to use international market based mechanisms, and to what extent
- How UNFCCC credits will be accounted for.
- What is the need for developing common systems and frameworks to ensure the environmental integrity in carbon markets up to 2020?

4. Issues related to single year targets vs multiple year targets

Parties with commitments under the Kyoto Protocol will have a carbon budget approach covering a period of eight years. Other Parties have informed that they will use a carbon budget approach, but not as a commitment under the Kyoto Protocol. Some Parties have stated that their 2020 commitment will be met as a single year target. The implications of this approach need to be discussed with respect to:

- How should the overall emission reduction effect for single year targets, be estimated?
- What are the implications for international carbon markets?
- How do Parties with this kind of approach intend to report on progress up to 2020?
What level of confidence would be necessary to ensure that they were on track to meet the target?

Submissions from Parties on this issue would help move the discussion forward. The work programme should give the opportunity for presentation of expert analyses of the implications of single year vs multiple year targets, with the view to identify common elements that need to be further developed.

5. Expected emission reductions

The calculation of expected emission reductions from the 2020 mitigation targets is a crucial part of the work programme, and must be based on the insights and clarification of the issues above. Knowing the expected emission reductions from each Party is an important element of comparability and is necessary to be able to review the global effort. However, comparability of effort is a broader concept and is also related to costs of measures, mitigation potentials and the extent to which Parties have taken action already. These aspects are very much related to the possibility of raising ambition. In our view, that discussion belongs in the ADP work plan on mitigation ambition.

The main purpose of the SBSTA work programme is to achieve a complete, factual overview of the mitigation targets as they have been presented, identify the basis for calculating the emission reduction effect, identify common elements of accounting for these targets and the scope for further work, for the final report to COP20.

Timeline and suggestions for progress in 2013

For the work this year, we suggest that the work programme starts along the structure outlined here, and that meetings are planned with distinct topics for discussion.

A workshop on land use and forest issues would be very welcome, as well as expert presentations/briefings on the inventory part of the clarification work (the scope of the targets) and on the implications of single year vs multiple year targets.

The work programme should deliver a progress report by COP19. This should include an update of the technical paper, as well as a progress report describing and outlining the issues for further work, in 2014.