

Forum and Work Program on the Impact of the Implementation of Response Measures
Third Session/ 38th Meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies
Submission of the United States of America

During the first meeting of the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures at the 36th Session of the Subsidiary Bodies in Bonn, Germany, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Assistance (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) agreed to implement the work program, as contained in an annex to FCCC/SBSTA/2012/L.18 and FCCC/SBI/2012/L.25. The aforementioned annex calls for submissions from Parties and relevant organizations with respect to the “areas” listed in the work program. It specifically calls for submissions in advance of the 38th session of the Subsidiary Bodies for the following four areas:

1. Area (c) In-forum workshop - Assessment and analysis of impacts;
2. Area (d) In-forum workshop - Exchanging experience and discussion of opportunities for economic diversification and transformation;
3. Area (e) In-forum expert meeting - Economic modeling and socio-economic trends; and
4. Area (g) In-forum workshop - Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs.

The United States’ views with respect to the four areas listed above are contained in the remainder of this submission. Given the agreed modalities laid out by the COP, we have focused our comments on potential topics for discussion related to these areas as well as on potential speakers that we feel would contribute to an effective, balanced dialogue on these issues. We request that special attention be paid to ensure that sufficient time is set aside for discussion after the presentations.

Area (c) In-forum workshop - Assessment and analysis of impacts

Many research organizations, such as the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, and multi-lateral organizations, including the World Bank and International Energy Agency, as well as numerous academics and national governments have undertaken detailed cost-benefit analyses and impact analyses related to taking action to respond to climate change, both from a high level and for specific policy actions. Representatives from these types of organizations, as well as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, would be well placed to share their insights with the Forum on area (c).

When inviting speakers, it will be imperative to ensure that presentations include a balance of information regarding assessment of the positive and negative impacts of the implementation of response measures to climate change. Assessing and analyzing the positive impacts is essential to putting any negative impacts in context, as the positive impacts show the economic, social and environmental benefits that result from taking action to address climate change.

Area (e) In-forum expert meeting - Economic modeling and socio-economic trends

The discussion of areas (c) and (e) would seem to complement each other, so the United States would suggest that discussion of the two areas be combined during the forum. Similar speakers would be appropriate for both areas.

Area (d) In-forum workshop - Exchanging experience and discussion of opportunities for economic diversification and transformation

Economic diversification is a challenging task that many developed and developing countries around the world face today. Economic diversification not only lessens the negative impacts of response measures to climate change, but also brings many other economic and often environmental and socio-economic benefits, including increasing economic resilience to climate change by reducing reliance on vulnerable economic sectors.

How each country tackles economic diversification is different and reflects its own specific conditions, especially resource constraints. Regardless of these differences, lessons learned and best practices can be culled from the experiences of others. The United States suggests that representatives from several countries present case studies on their own strategies for economic diversification, the challenges they have face, and successes that they have had. The case studies could be accompanied by one or more presentations from non-governmental experts from research organizations or multi-lateral development banks to provide a broader look at economic diversification, including its benefits and how it can help countries minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of the implementation of response measures to climate change.

Area (g) In-forum workshop - Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs

Promoting a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs is a critical area for consideration within the forum, and the United States believes that the discussion of this area should focus on actions that states can take to minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of response measures on their workers. Areas of discussion could include the following:

- Helping workers share in the benefits of transition through opportunities to gain the necessary skills;
- Respecting the rights of workers when implementing new policies and investing in new and emerging sectors;
- Protecting the health and safety of workers in developing sectors; and
- Providing social safety nets to help those dislocated by the shift to more environmentally sound consumption and production.

Given the forum's limited time, we would suggest that the presentations focus in on examples of education and retraining in order to promote a just transition of the workforce.

The United States believes that enhancing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is critical to ensure that our next generation of workers is prepared for the shift to a lower carbon economy. The United States has not only enhanced attention on STEM in primary through high school curricula but we are supporting those efforts with a commitment to train 100,000 new science, technology, engineering and math teachers over 10 years and the establishment of new teacher training and research internship programs, including programs run by Department of Energy National Laboratories. We have also created educational recognition and awards programs, like the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program and the US Department of Energy's National Science Bowl and Solar Decathlon, to spur greater student interest in STEM, and we established the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Education (ARPA-ED) to drive further education innovations that may be required to facilitate the just transition of our workforce.

To make sure that all of these programs are enhanced by efforts from outside the government as well, the US Government has expanded private-public partnerships to improve training and inspire students – especially girls– to excel in math and science. Non-governmental STEM education coalitions are also being formed by representatives across the technological workforce to provide support to educators and parents as well as to provide policy input to legislators.

Worker training and retraining are also a focus of a large number of US Government projects and programs. US Department of Labor (DOL) programs provide employment assistance and job training to individuals transitioning into jobs associated with a more sustainable economy. In particular, DOL's Employment and Training Administration give grants to US states to support opportunities for workers to receive job training in green industry sectors and occupations. Many other DOL agencies, including the Women's Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics, also run targeted activities aimed at facilitating the transition to greener jobs. The Department of Energy's (DOE) "Better Buildings Initiative" focuses on job opportunities related to building sustainable commercial buildings, improving federal and local policies, and enhancing access to information, financing, and tax incentives for sustainable buildings. DOE is also developing the National Training & Education Resource (NTER), an open source platform that allows individuals transitioning to a new field to acquire new skills at the time, place and pace that is convenient to them.

Again, initiatives outside of the US Government are also taking place with the intention of making sure that workers can successfully transition to a lower carbon economy. The United Nation's International Labour Organization (ILO) as well as national labor organizations, like the American Federation of Labor- Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) are actively promoting worker training and retraining initiatives. These groups would have additional insight to add to the forum's discussion on this topic.

Conclusion

We hope that the Parties and the Secretariat find our comments useful in preparation for the third meeting of the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures. The United States looks forward to hearing the views of the presenters and other Parties and to engaging in a productive discussion.