



Summary report on the multilateral assessment of the United States of America at the forty-sixth 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) – international assessment and review (IAR) – that aims to promote the comparability of efforts among all developed country Parties. According to the modalities and procedures for IAR specified in annex II to decision 2/CP.17, the 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 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.

2. The second round of MA of the United States of America took place at a working group session during SBI 46, on 13 May 2017. 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 United States had been submitted by the following delegations: Brazil, China, the European Union, Japan, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A list of the questions received and the answers provided by the United States as well as the broadcast of the session can be found on the IAR web page for the United States.¹ The Party can submit any other observations on its MA within two months of the working group session.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/10108.php>.

II. Proceedings

3. The working group session was chaired by the SBI Chair, Mr. Tomasz Chruszczow. The United States was represented by Mr. Trigg Talley, Department of State of the United States of America.

4. Mr. Talley made an opening presentation summarizing the United States' policy priorities and presented trends and drivers of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and of the key economic indicators. Mr. Talley noted that energy-related carbon dioxide emissions decreased by 14.0 per cent, while the gross domestic product increased by 17.0 per cent from 2005 to 2016. The United States' total GHG emissions excluding emissions and removals from land use, land-use change and forestry decreased by 11.5 per cent between 2005 and 2015. The decrease in the total GHG emissions can be attributed mainly to the decrease in the energy-related carbon intensity, reflecting continuous switching from coal to natural gas and increasing the share of renewable energy, the shift in the structure of the economy from manufacturing to service-based industries and the economic growth in the period after 2009 being slower than in the previous period.

5. According to its second biennial report, under the Convention, the United States made a commitment to reduce its GHG emissions in the range of 17.0 per cent below the 2005 level by 2020.

6. Mr. Talley highlighted from the outset that economic growth, job creation and national security are currently the general policy priorities of the United States. In this context, the government undertakes a review of existing climate change related policies. Owing to these new circumstances, the United States in its presentation did not address policies and measures (PaMs) as well as greenhouse gas emission projections and progress towards target as reported in the second biennial report of the United States of America. Mr. Talley elaborated on the provisions of the President of the United States' Executive Order on Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth which lays out the direction for the clean and safe development of all types of domestic energy resources, without what the government views as an unnecessary regulatory burden which constrains economic growth and prevents job creation. This Presidential Executive Order also calls for a number of specific actions in the energy and climate change fields (i.e. directing the Environmental Protection Agency to review the Clean Power Plan, the lifting the moratorium on coal leasing on federal land, reverting to 2003 guidance on the monetizing value of changes in GHGs and the revoking of previous presidential actions and reports on promoting resilience, climate and national security).

7. The opening presentation was followed by interventions and questions from the following delegations: Australia, Brazil, China, the European Union, India, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. The questions were related to: GHG emission trends (underlying factors for the observed decoupling of economic growth and GHG emission trends); PaMs (good practice in the improvement of energy efficiency, the estimation of the mitigation impacts of PaMs, specifically in the transport sector; analysis of the cost-effectiveness of PaMs and their implications for future economic growth and competitiveness; relations between federal and state-level climate change initiatives and the effects of state-level mitigation actions on the achievement of the national target; the role of the United States' mid-century strategy in directing the policies for achieving the target, as well as its implication on the long-term investment plans of the private sector); GHG projections (changes in methodologies and approaches used for sectoral GHG emission projections); plans for using units from market-based mechanisms for the achievement of the United States' target; stakeholder engagement in climate policy development, implementation and monitoring; and estimating public health and climate benefits arising from the Clean Power Plan. One question related to the contribution of the

United States to the Green Climate Fund and was outside the scope of the multilateral assessment.

8. In response, the United States provided further explanations. In particular, the United States explained that it is not in position to address the future policy-related questions at this session, owing to the fact that the in-depth review of the climate policies is ongoing. In the course of this review, the United States will analyse the cost-effectiveness of the new regulations with a view to ensuring the objectives of the new general policy priorities. Changes in the methodologies used for the preparation of GHG projections mostly resulted from the improvement and refinement of parameters and their uncertainties, particularly in the land use, land-use change and forestry sector. The effects of mandatory mitigation actions implemented at the state-level are included to a certain extent into the national GHG projections. With regard to the use of market-based mechanisms to meet its target, it was noted that it is highly unlikely that the United States will use them. With regard to the stakeholder engagement, the United States noted principles and formal steps in the regulatory process, which should ensure the adequate involvement of stakeholders during the ongoing policy review.
