



NEW ZEALAND

Submission to the APA on Adaptation 26 September 2016

Context

The conclusions of the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) invite Parties to submit views on, inter alia, further guidance in relation to the adaptation communication, including as a component of nationally determined contributions, referred to in Article 7, paragraphs 10 and 11, of the Paris Agreement. We note that the purpose of the submissions sought by the APA is to focus its work.

2 Article 7, paragraph 10, of the Paris Agreement states that each Party should, as appropriate, submit and update periodically an adaptation communication, which may include its priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions, without creating any additional burden for developing country Parties. Article 7, paragraph 11, states that the adaptation communication referred to in paragraph 10 of this Article shall be, as appropriate, submitted and updated periodically, as a component of or in conjunction with other communications or documents, including a national adaptation plan, a nationally determined contribution as referred to in Article 4, paragraph 2, and/or a national communication.

Adaptation Communications

3 New Zealand welcomes the Paris Agreement's emphasis on adaptation planning processes and implementation of actions. We recognise that adaptation communications can provide a useful vehicle for countries that choose to use them for highlighting the actions they are taking to respond to the impacts of climate change and in particular, communicating forward-looking components such as plans and support needs as appropriate.

4 From Articles 7.10, and 7.11 of the Paris Agreement (quoted in paragraph 2 above) New Zealand makes the following observations:

- Adaptation communications are not mandatory
- The updating and submission of an adaptation communication is not to create any additional burden on developing countries
- If a Party chooses to make an adaptation communication there is flexibility in how this is done i.e. as a component of, or in conjunction with other communications or documents.

- Some guidance on content of adaptation communications is given in Article 7.10 (i.e. priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions), but this is prefaced with “may include” offering further flexibility to each Party.

5 There are several existing channels for Parties to communicate adaptation actions and (as appropriate) needs. Parties that place a high priority on being able to communicate adaptation needs don't need to wait for further guidance on adaptation communications under the Paris Agreement in order to do this. National communications are designed to serve this purpose already. Moreover, the current national adaptation plan process enables Parties to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs) as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those needs.

6 However, it may be useful for those Parties that choose to submit adaptation communications to have some high-level guidance on the potential content of those communications.

Other work streams

7 In discussing further guidance on adaptation communications we need to be conscious of, and deliberate in making, linkages with other work-streams that also create a need to report adaptation information, and/or use adaptation information. Of particular relevance are Article 13 (transparency), and Article 14 (global stocktake).

8 The Paris Agreement is not clear on how the adaptation communications under Article 7 relate to the provisions of Article 13 (Transparency). Amongst other things, the purpose of the framework for transparency of action (as described in Article 13, paragraph 5) is to provide a clear understanding of climate change action, including Parties' adaptation actions under Article 7. This may include good practices, priorities, needs and gaps. But even in Article 13 (Article 13.8), the instruction to provide information related to climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 7 is a “should” i.e. reporting this information is not made mandatory by Article 13 either. This contrasts with the language in the chapeau of Article 13.7 (on national inventory reports and providing information to track progress made in implementing and achieving NDCs) which is “each Party shall”.

9 While still maintaining flexibility to Parties to report on adaptation plans, actions and needs in a way that best suits their own circumstances, a possible solution to the relationship between adaptation communications under Article 7 and reporting on climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 13, is to have adaptation communications be forward-looking and reporting under the transparency framework being backward-looking.

10 The relationship between adaptation (Article 7) and the global stocktake (Article 14) is outlined in Article 7.14. The global stocktake under Article 14 is to (amongst other things) enhance implementation of adaptation action taking into account the adaptation communication (Article 7.14 (b)), and review the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation (Article 7.14(d)). Acknowledging that adaptation communications have a relationship with the global stocktake suggests that the guidance for adaptation communications could, amongst other aspects of the guidance, help generate useful inputs

to the stocktake. However we will need more information about the form and process for the stocktake to know how this will work in practice which leads to an iterative process. This suggests that a useful starting point for the elaboration of guidance for adaptation communications should be Article 7.10 – providing a means for Parties to communicate “priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions” and that better defining the relationship to the global stocktake could come a little later.

Mode of work

11 It would be useful for the secretariat to compile the existing guidance for reporting adaptation actions and needs (as appropriate). This would include the reporting guidelines for national communications for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, and the NAP guidelines. This could form a useful input to the work under APA agenda item 4.

Conclusion

12 Given the non-mandatory nature of adaptation communications, the flexibility already granted to Parties in terms of the “vehicle” for reporting and the content, and the need to not create any additional burden on developing countries, New Zealand’s view is that any guidance on adaptation communications should be very high level and applicable to all Parties (as appropriate). Development of this high level guidance can be informed by the existing reporting guidelines for national communications under the UNFCCC (for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties) as well as the NAPs process, alongside the development of the modalities, procedures and guidelines for transparency under Article 13.

13 New Zealand looks forward to discussions on this issue at the next meeting of the APA.