



NEW ZEALAND

Submission to the APA on Adaptation Communications April 2017

Context

The conclusions of the second part of the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) invite Parties to submit by 30 March 2017, further views in relation to the adaptation communication, including, inter alia, as a component of nationally determined contributions, referred to in Article 7, paragraphs 10 and 11, of the Paris Agreement, taking into account the discussions on this item at this session as well as the annex to the informal note prepared by the co-facilitators for agenda item 4.

- 2 In their informal note the co-facilitators ask:
 - what information would serve the purpose of the adaptation communications?
 - what is the relationship with existing guidance for communications and vehicles?
 - how and when should adaptation communications be communicated?
 - what are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the possible vehicles?
 - how to design adaptation communications that do not create an additional burden?
 - how do we balance between flexibility and the need for uniformity of vehicle to facilitate comparison?

- 3 New Zealand thanks the co-facilitators for the questions. As context for this submission we re-state from our September 2016 submission the following observations from Articles 7.10, and 7.11 of the Paris Agreement:
 - 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.

What information would serve the purpose of the adaptation communications?

- 4 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 including communicating forward-looking components such as plans and support needs as appropriate. These aspects are captured in Article 7.10.

What is the relationship with existing guidance for communications and vehicles?

5 The existing reporting guidelines for national communications under the UNFCCC (for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties) as well as the guidance that is part of the NAPs process can serve as a foundation for reporting impacts and adaptation information, and Parties may choose to use national communications or reporting under the NAP process as the vehicle for their adaptation communication. This foundation, together with the relevant paragraphs of Article 7 can also serve for developing reporting guidance for adaptation communications together with reporting guidelines under Article 13.

How and when should adaptation communications be communicated?

6 In New Zealand's view this question is answered in the Paris Agreement. Firstly, adaptation communications are not mandatory: "each Party should, as appropriate, submit and update periodically an adaptation communication" (Article 7.10). Secondly, for Parties that choose to make an adaptation communication, they have flexibility on the vehicle (as per Article 7.11). Hence periodicity is largely determined through other processes.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the possible vehicles?

7 As stated above, if a Party elects to make an adaptation communication, it can choose the vehicle for the communication. In New Zealand's view, the APA cannot modify this flexibility as each Party is entitled to make its own assessment of the vehicle to use.

How to design adaptation communications that do not create an additional burden?

8 Working out the relationship between adaptation communications under Article 7 and the impacts and adaptation reporting under the transparency framework (Article 13.8) is particularly important in helping to ensure that adaptation communications do not create an additional burden.

9 As already noted above there is flexibility on the vehicle for the adaptation communication. Article 7.11 states: "as a component of or in conjunction with other communications or documents, including...." And while not specifically listed, this could include choosing to use the biennial communication under the transparency framework as the vehicle. For example a Party may choose to identify the chapter on impacts and adaptation in the biennial communication as the adaptation communication from that Party.

10 Given this flexibility, which is granted to all Parties, the APA should focus on developing high level guidance that can work no matter what the choice of vehicle might be. This then would provide the overarching framework for reporting information on impacts and adaptation under the Paris Agreement: as per Article 13.8, together with picking up the elements in Article 7 that could be reported on in order to gain as complete a picture as possible of Parties' actions on adaptation, and assist with the aggregation of information necessary for the periodic global stocktake.

11 In New Zealand's view by developing guidance that would enable Parties to meet multiple objectives without having to submit multiple reports we can avoid placing an unnecessary burden on Parties (which the Paris Agreement directs us to do).

12 In New Zealand's recent submission (February 2017) on the transparency framework we provided an annex that contained an outline of the content of reporting guidelines under Article 13, including a section covering the reporting information on impacts and adaptation. For ease of reference this section is annexed to this submission.

How do we balance between flexibility and the need for uniformity of vehicle to facilitate comparison?

13 As stated above there can be no uniformity of vehicle: the Paris Agreement has granted Parties the ability to choose the vehicle that suits their own circumstances, and development of guidance for reporting cannot remove this flexibility. In addition, given that adaptation is a country-driven process, and the approaches taken will depend on national circumstances and national impacts, risks and vulnerabilities, it is not clear to New Zealand what needs to be compared and why it is necessary to "facilitate comparison".

14 However, as described in paragraph 11 above, developing guidance that would enable Parties to meet multiple objectives without having to submit multiple reports might be a pragmatic approach that would result in most Parties taking a similar approach to adaptation reporting irrespective of the vehicle of choice.

Conclusion

15 New Zealand looks forward to discussing these ideas further at the next APA session, including the pre-session workshop.

Annex:

Extract from the Annex to New Zealand's submission on transparency, February 2017

Section 3

Potential structure for the part of the reporting guidelines covering information related to climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 7 (Article 13, paragraph 8)

A. INFORMATION ON THE EXPECTED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Such information could cover:

- Climate modelling, projections and scenarios, relevant to the assessment of climate change impacts and vulnerability;
- Climate change impacts

B. INFORMATION ON RISKS AND VULNERABILITY

Such information could cover:

- Assessment of climate risks and vulnerability to current and expected climate change impacts

C. INFORMATION ON ACTION TAKEN TO PLAN FOR AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Such information could include:

- Domestic adaptation planning processes
- Implemented and planned actions, strategies, approaches
- Building the resilience of socioeconomic and ecological systems
- Progress and outcomes of adaptation action
- Monitoring and evaluation

D. INFORMATION ON COOPERATION ON ENHANCING ADAPTATION

Such information on cooperation and enhancing adaptation could include efforts made regarding:

- the sharing of information, good practices, experiences and lessons learned, including as these efforts relate to science, planning, policies and implementation in relation to adaptation actions.
- Strengthening institutional arrangements to support the synthesis of relevant information and knowledge, and the provision of technical support and guidance to Parties
- Strengthening scientific knowledge on climate, including research, systematic observations of the climate system and early warning systems in a manner that informs climate services and supports decision-making
- Assisting developing countries in identifying effective adaptation practices, adaptation needs, priorities, support provided and received for adaptation actions and efforts, and challenges and gaps, in a manner consistent with good practices
- Improving the effectiveness and durability of adaptation actions.