



Distr.
GENERAL

FCCC/SB/1997/INF.1
25 February 1997

ENGLISH ONLY

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Fifth Session

Bonn, 25-28 February 1997

Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Fifth Session

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Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN
ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

Secretariat activities to facilitate the provision of support to non-Annex I
Parties for the preparation of their initial national communications

Note by the secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. According to Article 12.5 of the Convention, each Party not included in Annex I to the Convention shall make its initial communication within three years of the entry into force of the Convention for that Party, or of the availability of financial resources in accordance with Article 4 Paragraph 3. Parties that are least developed countries may make their initial communication at their discretion.

2. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its second session, by its decision 10/CP.2 paragraph 1 (a), requested the secretariat, in accordance with Article 8.2 (c) of the Convention, to facilitate assistance **to Parties**, particularly developing country Parties, in the

preparation of their initial communications, through the organization of workshops at the regional level; to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences in the development of emission factors and activity data for the estimation of the inventory, as well as, on request, for other elements of information in the initial communications; and to provide a report to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, at each of their sessions (FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1).

3. At the same session, the COP, by its decision 3/CP.2, having considered the progress report of the secretariat on its activities relating to technical and financial support to Parties, namely CC:INFO, CC:TRAIN, CC:FORUM and CC:SUPPORT, requested the secretariat to prepare a progress report for consideration by the SBI at its **sixth** session (FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1).

4. This document contains information on activities of the secretariat in response to decisions 10/CP.2 and 3/CP.2. A progress report on these activities will be submitted by the secretariat for consideration by the SBI at its sixth session. Its agenda will provide an opportunity for Parties to provide guidance to the secretariat on work in this area.

II. ACTIVITIES

A. Information on expected submission dates of initial national communications

5. In the notification from the Executive Secretary to Parties dated 28 October 1996, it was noted that the adoption of guidelines by COP2 opened the way for the preparation of communications from non-Annex I Parties. Most of these Parties are undertaking or have undertaken activities towards this end, with financial and technical support provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and bilateral, regional and other multilateral channels.

6. By the same notification, non-Annex I Parties were invited to communicate to the secretariat the expected dates for the submission of their initial national communications. Moreover, the secretariat, in cooperation with multilateral and bilateral organizations, also distributed a questionnaire to obtain information on the expected dates of publication of communications from non-Annex I Parties.

7. The responses have been compiled and are presented in a table in annex I. Responses were received from 47 Parties, including eight from least developed countries. 22 Parties have indicated a tentative date or range of dates for the submission of their communications; 25 Parties have not yet determined such a date; 75 Parties have not responded. **Parties are invited to review the information and, where appropriate, supplement, update or amend it.** Based on the information received, the secretariat will prepare an updated table for consideration by the SBI at its sixth session.

B. Organization of regional workshops

8. The secretariat participated in a number of regional workshops, where it presented a module on the guidelines for the preparation of initial national communications of non-Annex I Parties and the financial and technical assistance that is available for the preparation of these communications.
9. Inputs were provided in the following workshops, which were attended by policy makers and technical experts involved in the preparation of initial national communications of their countries:
- (a) Tunis, Tunisia (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 3-4 October 1996, attended by participants from Maghreb countries);
 - (b) Nairobi, Kenya (UNDP and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 24-25 November 1996, participants from East African countries);
 - (c) Beijing, China (United States Country Studies Program (US-CSP), 12-15 November 1996, interregional) and
 - (d) Jakarta, Indonesia (US-CSP, 6-8 January 1997, participants from the Asia-Pacific region).
10. In addition, in November 1996, the Central Asian States Workshop on the Preparation of Initial Communications of non-Annex I Countries and overview of the Implementation of the Climate Change Convention was organized by the secretariat in collaboration with the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Problems of Climate Change, UNDP and UNEP. The workshop requested the main administration of Hydrometeorology of the Republic of Uzbekistan to submit a project proposal to UNEP, in accordance with Decision 10/CP.2 paragraph 13, to improve the methods of calculation of greenhouse gas emissions and sinks for countries with arid climates. This request was submitted to UNEP in December 1996.
11. The secretariat also cooperated with the Environment Agency of Japan, and other institutions and agencies in the organization of the Sixth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change, held in Suva, Fiji, on 4-8 November 1996.
12. In February 1997, in conjunction with the fifth session of the SBI, the Secretariat of the GEF, UNDP, UNEP and the Convention secretariat will organize the GEF - UNFCCC Workshop on National Communications. This workshop is intended to

familiarize delegates of non-Annex I Parties with the process of preparing their national communications and accessing financial resources for these activities.

C. Organization of CC:FORUM

13. The secretariat has continued to organize meetings of the informal consultative group aimed at coordinating the exchange of views on the provision of technical and financial support to developing countries and economies in transition (CC:FORUM).

14. The fourth and fifth meetings of CC:FORUM took place in Geneva on 15 July and 19 December 1996 respectively. Both meetings were attended by representatives from Parties, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and NGOs, and issues relating to the preparation of the initial national communications of non-Annex I Parties were discussed.

15. The fifth meeting of CC:FORUM, in particular, consisted of a one-day session that addressed the requests expressed by Parties in decision 10/CP.2. The conclusions of this meeting are contained in annex II to this document.

16. The sixth meeting of CC:FORUM is being organized in February 1997 to consider the implementation of these conclusions and to discuss further steps to be taken. The secretariat will continue to report on the outcomes of CC:FORUM, in its progress report which will be submitted to the SBI at its sixth session.

17. The Convention secretariat is working with the Secretariat of the GEF, UNDP and UNEP in the development of a project aimed at providing, in a proactive and systematic manner, non-Annex I Parties with technical and financial support needed to complete their initial national communications in the light of the guidelines contained in decision 10/CP.2.

D. Information exchange

18. The work of the secretariat in this area has been focusing on enhancing the information flow related to the preparation of initial national communications by non-Annex I Parties. To this end, a number of activities, including the development of new information products, have been carried out.

19. Among these activities, is the Update to CC:INFO Report - February 1997 which has been prepared, and will be distributed to more than 500 recipients in developing countries, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and government bodies. This update provides current information on each Party's activities related to the implementation of the Convention. An information package will be distributed to the Heads of Delegations attending the fifth session of the Subsidiary Bodies.

20. The secretariat has also made progress in a related activity, namely CC:INFO/Web. The goal of this activity is to encourage Parties to develop national web sites on climate change and the implementation of the Convention, and to foster the growth of a network of such sites for the sharing of information and ideas, including the preparation of national communications.

21. CC:INFO/Web seeks to respond to a request of the SBI in March 1996 to prepare proposals for strengthening and expanding the secretariat's information activities (CC:INFO). It has been developed with assistance provided by the Ministry of Science and Technology of Brazil, funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and taking into account comments, suggestions and observations from Parties which expressed interest in joining this initiative and contributing to its development. These Parties include Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, Senegal, Seychelles, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

22. This web-based system is appropriate for compiling and sharing information sets, tables and other material, the production of which requires inputs from several individuals and institutions. This applies particularly to cross-disciplinary, multi-sectoral efforts such as those undertaken by a Party to prepare a national communication.

23. A CC:INFO/Web CD-ROM will be distributed to Heads of Delegations attending the fifth session of the Subsidiary Bodies with a view to familiarizing Parties with its concept, and to seek their guidance on possible next steps to be taken with regard to ways and means to strengthen and expand the exchange of information on the implementation of the Convention by taking advantage of recent developments in electronic communication.

E. Training

24. CC:TRAIN is a three-year UNDP project that supports the efforts of 17 developing countries in various regions to implement the Convention, particularly in preparing their initial national communications. CC:TRAIN is funded by the GEF and bilateral donors, and executed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in collaboration with UNFCCC and UNEP.

25. CC:TRAIN supports the establishment of national climate change bodies, or "country teams", entrusted with the task of preparing the national communication. Since the inception of its second phase in May 1996, eight participating countries in Africa and Latin America have established country teams and in most cases organized national workshops on climate change and the Convention. In most other countries, an initial national communication team has also been established.

26. Starting in March 1997, a series of national and regional workshops will take place in Africa and Latin America. There will be ten events in Africa, 14 events in Latin America and a number of other events in the Asia-Pacific region in partnership with the GEF-funded UNDP Pacific Island Climate Change Assistance Programme (PICCAP).

27. The secretariat has also contracted UNITAR/CC:TRAIN with the development of a standard presentation and information package designed to inform national decision and policy makers on the guidelines for the national communications of non-Annex I Parties. This material, to be developed in English, French and Spanish, will be made available to Parties and multilateral and bilateral organizations for their use in national and regional events on the preparation of initial national communications.