



Fact sheet: UNFCCC Emissions Reporting

The supreme body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is its Conference of the Parties, or COP. This year, the COP is convening in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the UN Climate Change Conference – Copenhagen, 2009 from 7 to 18 December 2009. Central to the intergovernmental process of the COP is an imperative to prepare, share, communicate and respond to information by way of national communications and reports on greenhouse gas inventories. These communications provide the means by which the COP monitors progress made by Parties in meeting their commitments and in achieving the Convention's ultimate objectives.

How is greenhouse gas data reviewed?

National communications and greenhouse gas inventories from Annex I Parties (industrialized countries – see glossary below for definition) are subject to review by international teams of independent experts. The aim is to provide a thorough technical assessment of steps taken by each Party to implement its commitments. Expert review teams are selected from a roster of experts nominated by Parties and are coordinated by the Secretariat. The results of the work of the expert review teams are published in reports available on the Secretariat web site <unfccc.int>. National communications are typically reviewed by in-country visits, but on an exceptional basis, the reviews for most Parties for the fourth national communication were conducted as desk reviews. A separate in-depth review report is provided for each Party. In addition, the UNFCCC secretariat prepares compilation and synthesis reports on national communications. The national communications from Annex I Parties are submitted periodically and the next is due on 1 January 2010. Since 2003, greenhouse gas inventories from all Annex I Parties have been reviewed annually. The review is conducted in three stages: an initial check of the completeness of the submissions; a synthesis and assessment, which compares inventory information across Parties; and an individual review by expert review teams of the methods and data used to prepare each inventory. A separate review report is provided annually for each Party.

How do non-Annex I Parties report?

Non-Annex I Parties (developing countries) are not required to submit a separate annual greenhouse gas inventory, and their national communications are not subject to in-depth reviews. As at January 2007, 134 Parties have submitted their initial national communication. By January 2009, nine Parties had submitted a second national communication and one Party has submitted a third. These national communications contain information about most gases by sectors, providing the basis for an overall estimation of the GHG emissions from these countries. Many contain estimates of both emissions and removals of GHGs. The current UNFCCC guidelines for national communications from non-Annex I Parties require them to estimate GHG inventories for the year 2000. However, based on the previous UNFCCC guidelines, many Parties have presented data for



two (mainly 1990 and 1994) or more years. But many developing countries still face reporting challenges, notably the least developed countries (LDCs), which in view of their lack of resources are not required to submit their national communications within a specified period. Even so, 44 of the 48 LDCs that are Parties to the Convention had submitted their national communications by January 2009.

What is the greenhouse gas database?

To manage and blend the abundant flows of data emerging from reporting and review processes, the UNFCCC secretariat has developed a Greenhouse Gas Information System as the basis for the provision of information to the Conference of the Parties and for various types of data analysis. The database is continuously maintained to ensure the reliability of data. The most important information from the database is accessible to the public online at the GHG page on the UNFCCC website <http://unfccc.int/ghg_data/items/3800.php> where data on GHG emissions in various breakdowns (by sector, gas and year) can be viewed and downloaded.

Glossary of key terms

Annex I Parties

The industrialized countries listed in this annex to the Convention which were committed to return their greenhouse-gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 as per Article 4.2 (a) and (b). They have also accepted emissions targets for the period 2008-12 as per Article 3 and Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol. They include the 24 original OECD members, the European Union, and 14 countries with economies in transition (Croatia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and Slovenia joined Annex I at COP 3, and the Czech Republic and Slovakia replaced Czechoslovakia.)

Annex II Parties

The countries listed in Annex II to the Convention which have a special obligation to provide financial resources and facilitate technology transfer to developing countries. Annex II Parties include the 24 original OECD members plus the European Union.

Annex B Parties

The group of countries included in Annex B in the Kyoto Protocol that have agreed to a target for their greenhouse gas emissions, including all the Annex I countries (as amended in 1998) but excluding Turkey.

Non -Annex I Parties

These are developing countries recognised by the Convention including major developing countries as well as LDCs, many of whom are recognised as being specially vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, including those with low-lying coastal areas and those prone to desertification or drought. Others include those heavily reliant on income from fossil-fuel production and commerce.



Greenhouse gases (GHGs)

The atmospheric gases responsible for causing global warming and climate change. The major GHGs are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Less prevalent --but very powerful -- greenhouse gases are hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆).

LULUCF

Land use, land-use change and forestry. Climate change can be partially counteracted at relatively low cost by removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere for example by planting trees or improving forest management. But it is often difficult to estimate reductions (removals) of greenhouse gases achieved or to estimate emissions resulting from other changes to land use. These land-use change activities include afforestation, reforestation and deforestation, as well as forest management, cropland management, grazing land management and revegetation. Consequently LULUCF activities are subject to specific rules under the Kyoto Protocol. For this reason data shows emissions including and excluding LULUCF.