Training Workshop on
Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)
- Pacific Islands -

Apia, Samoa
28-29 September 2015

MEETING SUMMARY

Overview

This technical training workshop on Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat and the Government of Australia. The training was part of the joint UNDP-UNFCCC INDC Regional Dialogues funded by a number of donors¹ and was hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) at their headquarters in Apia, Samoa.

The workshop provided representatives of Pacific Island countries (PICs) with in-depth technical training on INDCs; offered a forum for learning from INDC submissions to date; addressed pending technical questions related to INDC preparation; and sought to improve participants’ capacity to prepare and submit INDCs to the UNFCCC Secretariat ahead of the 21st Conference of Parties (COP-21) in Paris. It was organized primarily around four clinics on thematic areas related to INDC preparation. These clinics were run by resource experts, included practical exercises, and relied on case studies of submitted and advanced INDCs in order to illustrate “good practices” or different options related to the clinic topic. The workshop was attended by 26 participants from 13 PICs, as well as a number of resource experts and representatives of other organizations.

Welcome and Opening

A panel of high-level participants provided welcoming remarks and opened the workshop. Mr. Suluimalo Amataga Penaia, Chief Executive Officer, Samoan Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, welcomed all participants to Samoa and urged countries to begin their INDC preparation processes if they had not done so already. Ms. Sue Langford, Australian High Commissioner, underscored in her opening remarks Australia’s support for countries in the region and the various purposes of INDCs (e.g., international recognition, domestic coordination, etc.). Mr. Donald Cooper, Coordinator, UNFCCC Secretariat, explained that the UNFCCC’s synthesis report on the aggregate effect of submitted INDCs would be a cornerstone of the Paris agreement. He highlighted UNDP’s role in assisting countries with INDC preparations and advised countries to take their time in preparing robust INDCs if they are not on schedule to submit by 1 October.

Ms. Lizbeth Cullity, Resident Representative, UNDP Samoa, underscored the opportunity of COP-21 and the role of small island countries in the process. Finally, Mr. Stuart Chape, Officer in Charge,

¹ This series of INDC dialogues is funded by Australia, Austria, Belgium, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
SPREP, explained that INDCs are political documents that allow countries to receive recognition for domestic actions, and could also drive further domestic action by raising the visibility of mitigation at the national level. He emphasized national reasons for preparing INDCs, the option of including adaptation, and the role of small countries in challenging larger emitters.

Brief Update on INDC Process & Submissions to Date

Mr. Bernd Hackmann, UNFCCC Secretariat, presented on the current status of INDC submissions, which at the time of the workshop represented 81 Parties and over 73% of global emissions. He mentioned that about half of the submitted INDCs are economy-wide and that 65% of Parties had communicated an adaptation component in their INDCs. He predicted that approximately 40 more INDCs would be submitted before the 1 October cut-off date for inclusion in the UNFCCC Secretariat’s synthesis report. The Secretariat explained that INDCs are political documents that are typically very short (although underpinned by significant technical work) and that countries not ready to submit by 1 October are still strongly encouraged to submit before the Paris COP.

Learning from Submitted/Advanced INDCs

Presentations were made by countries that had finalized their INDCs or currently in the process of doing so, which fueled discussion among participants. Ms. Angeline Heine, Marshall Islands, presented on her country’s INDC, which was submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat on 21 July 2015. The INDC includes a commitment to reduce emissions 32% below 2010 levels by 2025 and an indicative target to reach -45% by 2030. She explained how the country went about deciding key issues (e.g., target, base year, mitigation options, etc.) and linking the process to the second national communication. Ms. Heine provided examples of actions to be undertaken and explained challenges encountered in the process (e.g., stakeholder consultations and gaps in institutional arrangements), as well as the importance of political will in driving the process.

Ms. Vanda Faasoa Chan-Ting, Samoa, presented on her country’s INDC, which reflects a recent effort funded by UNDP with the goal of submitting by 1 October. The INDC communicates Samoa’s intention to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2025. Given the short timeframe for INDC development, Samoa chose to focus its INDC on the energy sector (in which there is national progress and available data) and to exclude adaptation for the time being (because of the need for extensive stakeholder consultations).

Mr. Teina Rongo, Cook Islands, explained that his country is currently collecting data and performing interviews, but due to a lack of capacity and communication, the INDC is not seen as a priority by some. He explained, however, that data recording had improved with the second national communication from 2006. Energy accounts for 80% of emissions (50% of which comes from electricity), and the Cook Islands intends to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2020 (which will reduce emissions by approximately 27%).

Mr. Jamie Ovia, Tuvalu, explained his country’s circumstances with respect to reducing emissions and said that Tuvalu has a goal to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2020, and maintaining that effort if demand should increase. Tuvalu has faced challenges related to data availability and human capacity for GHG inventory calculations but is “passionate” about finishing its INDC, even if not by 1 October.

During discussion, it became clear that many countries had originally considered INDCs as principally mitigation-focused. A large percentage of countries are focusing INDCs only on the energy sector, given the link to energy roadmaps that PICs have developed. Participants discussed the possibility of
PICs missing the opportunity to properly reflect the highest priorities of their domestic climate change programs, such as increasing resilience and advancing development.

**Monitoring of INDC Implementation & Co-Benefits**

This session was facilitated by Mr. Murray Ward, Global Climate Change Consultancy and Samoa Biogas Systems, who began with an overview presentation on the importance of and approaches to monitoring co-benefits within INDCs, as well as background on monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) in the climate negotiations. He explained that, in addition to political documents in the context of the Paris COP, INDCs also represent an opportunity to garner financial support for national efforts. Monitoring of INDCs is important both in demonstrating progress internationally and for domestic reasons (e.g., progress toward national goals, helping build political support, etc.). Mr. Ward asserted that the wider the lens of the INDC (e.g., including adaptation), the easier to see synergies and non-greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits. He explained that, for the time being, PICs do not need to include substantial detail on MRV in their INDC submissions, but rather general statements on plans to improve monitoring systems. Details on international MRV of INDCs are to be determined.

**Papua New Guinea (PNG)** served as a case study for discussions. The country has a monitoring system in place that can be built on in the context of its INDC, and important national-level institutional developments have taken place. A climate change management bill currently before parliament will give the Office of Climate Change authority in enforcing data sharing. In discussion, participants addressed the need for capacity building for monitoring INDCs and co-benefits, as well as the need for funding for INDC implementation. Land ownership and the measurement of co-benefits to increase political support arose as key issues for the region. Participants and resource experts highlighted the possibility of building on national systems for monitoring INDCs, especially after more clarity arises from the international process.

**Clinic A: Data & Analysis to Underpin Mitigation INDCs**

This clinic was facilitated by Professor Frank Jotzo, Australian National University, who focused the session on the development of baselines, as well as data and analysis needs for INDCs. He explained the advantages and disadvantages of conditional targets and showed how different target types and base years can reflect the exact same outcome. He cautioned that complex targets (e.g., intensity targets and trajectory targets) require more detailed data and analysis while targets relative to baselines have the advantage of being revisable in light of new developments.

Professor Jotzo advised that making rough cost estimates of mitigation options (e.g., using marginal abatement cost curves) is useful in deciding policies and actions to prioritize (i.e., implement less expensive options first). He asserted that implementing mitigation options in just one sector and not the rest of the economy might not be cost-effective. While sophisticated analysis and models are useful, their results are also subject to uncertainty. Simple methods can be useful to inform INDC analysis (e.g., extrapolation of emissions trends, rough mitigation cost estimates, using estimates produced for other countries). With respect to data, Professor Jotzo advised countries to draw on existing data sets (e.g., from national inventories, national communications, international data sources); combine activity data with emissions factors (e.g., energy sector data); interpolate or extrapolate where necessary; and adapt data from other countries/studies, if needed.

In discussion, participants discussed the possibility of establishing regional capacity for low-emissions analysis. The INDC development process has shown that national teams have worked individually, often with limited capacity, and on similar problems. It was suggested that regional
analytical capacity be established (e.g., on energy sector mitigation issues) to provide services to PIC governments and relevant agencies. This could include compiling national and international data and making models and analysis available to PICs as requested. Participants expressed support for this kind of initiative.

Clinic B: Options for Packaging INDCs & Information for INDC Submissions

Clinic B was facilitated by Mr. Michael Comstock, UNDP, and Mr. Espen Ronneberg, SPREP. Mr. Comstock began the session with an overview presentation on the menu of possible contribution types, including the advantages, disadvantages, and implications of options (e.g., level of certainty, data needs, etc.). The presentation drew on an INDC guidance document produced by UNDP and the World Resources Institute, available here. He emphasized the possibility of communicating outcomes, actions, or a combination of the two. Mr. Comstock described outcomes as intents to achieve a specific result in GHG or non-GHG terms (e.g., renewable energy targets); expressing INDCs as outcomes facilitates aggregation and provides flexibility in how they are achieved. Actions can be seen as the specific means to achieve GHG reductions; they are more easily verifiable but harder to translate into GHG terms. Combining outcomes and actions provides more certainty on expected emissions reductions and on the means of achieving them. Countries should consider practicalities and data needed for each. Mr. Comstock also elaborated on the types of information that may be included in INDCs, drawing on INDC submissions to date.

Kiribati served as a case study for this clinic’s discussions. The country is considering a reduction of 63k CO2eq, but is trying to seek a balance between what is needed for 1.5 degrees and not over-promising. Their emissions projections to 2030 are based on an extrapolation of the 2000-2014 period. Kiribati is looking at achievable reductions from BAU by 2025 or 2030, as well as additional reductions that could be possible with international support.

Participants partook in an interactive exercise on options for packaging and communicating INDCs using emissions data for a fictitious country. During discussion, it was clear that INDCs being developed by PICs represent a broad range of contribution types and have been initiated both bottom-up from the technical level and top-down by heads of state. Participants mentioned key constraints to energy-focused INDCs (e.g., grid stability, maintenance, etc.), as well as possibilities for developing INDCs based on actions in sectors besides energy and deriving GHG reductions from those actions. There was also discussion of possible interactions between domestic pre-2020 goals and INDCs (which are post-2020), as well as the legally binding nature of INDCs (not legally binding in themselves, as this depends on the outcome of COP-21).

Clinic C: Voluntary Adaptation Options

This clinic was facilitated by Mr. Peniamina Leavai, USAID/SPREP Consultant, who provided an introductory presentation on options for including an adaptation component in INDCs (e.g., goals, strategies, needs), drawing on examples from submitted INDCs. He explained the difference between INDCs, which communicate intentions internationally, and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which relate to domestic planning. The presentation emphasized the flexibility that countries have in including adaptation. Some countries had initially decided not to communicate adaptation undertakings through the INDC process, citing the difficulty of coordinating adaptation plans at the national level in a short timeframe. However, some participants were attracted to the idea that adaptation plans and priorities could be communicated in a simple manner.

Nauru served as a case study for discussions during the adaptation clinic. The main focus of the country’s INDC is mitigation, but there was a conscious effort to highlight sustainable development
priorities and challenges. The contents of the INDC include mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. Nauru highlighted limited capacity and lack of national adaptation projects as adaptation-related constraints in developing the INDC.

Participants addressed in smaller groups a number of discussion questions prepared for the session. During discussion, it became clear that several country participants had initially considered INDCs as largely mitigation-focused, and that some PICs had delayed INDC preparations because of this perceived focus. Because of the options presented for including adaptation, several participants indicated an interest in reconsidering whether to include an adaptation component or communicating an adaptation undertaking. Participants mentioned the benefits of a wider INDC scope that includes adaptation: serving as an entry point on INDCs for PICs and equipping leaders from the region with the political messages they will want to take to COP-21. They also discussed possible ways to measure adaptation and resilience (e.g., Marshall Islands example of measuring access to potable water), as well as support needs for adaptation. Australia also mentioned its intention to submit a National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy separate to its INDC, noting that adaptation efforts are a concern for all countries.

**Clinic D: Procedural Issues & Domestic Validation of INDCs**

Clinic D was facilitated by Mr. Kevin Petrini, UNDP Regional Center, and Mr. Bernd Hackmann, UNFCCC Secretariat. The session focused on procedural issues around the submission of INDCs, including internal approval processes, engaging other ministries and stakeholders, and securing high-level political endorsement or approval of INDCs. The facilitators provided an introductory presentation on these topics, which was followed by a country case study and interactive discussion.

**Papua New Guinea (PNG)** has a Climate Change Act, which mandates access to information from various sectors. Stakeholder engagement in PNG was relatively straightforward because of strong existing coordination mechanisms for climate change. However, further outreach (e.g., at the provincial level) was needed in the context of developing the INDC. PNG indicated that some of the INDC work was already captured in existing documents and materials, but there is an opportunity to be more ambitious.

The following are key themes and messages that arose during discussions:

- Countries should engage a wide group of stakeholders (including traditional leaders), recognizing that certain incentives will result in better participation;
- INDCs are national documents that can be presented to international donors and presented back to stakeholders to increase credibility and enhance national consensus;
- INDC development is a nationally driven process that should draw on existing institutional coordination mechanisms (e.g., central ministry that coordinates with sectoral ministries);
- Countries should take into consideration previously announced goals (although no specific definition of “backsliding” in the national context);
- Countries should clearly articulate resource and capacity support needs for development and implementation of INDCs;
- INDCs submitted by 1 October will be included in the UNFCCC Secretariat’s synthesis report, but countries that need more time are still encouraged to submit after that date;
- INDCs in themselves are not legally binding documents (legally binding nature depends on outcome of COP-21); and
- INDCs are an on-going work in progress; submission is the first step of a long process.
Closing Remarks

Mr. Michael Comstock, UNDP, Mr. Donald Cooper, UNFCCC Secretariat, and Mr. Espen Ronneberg, SPREP, provided closing remarks on behalf of the co-organizers. They thanked government representatives for their active participation in the workshop, characterized INDCs as the cornerstone for a successful global climate agreement in Paris, and underscored the role of PICs in ensuring the agreement is fair and ambitious. They also expressed sincere thanks to the sponsors of the workshop, and acknowledged efforts made to assist Pacific Island countries in preparing and submitting their INDCs. The co-organizers highlighted their availability and interest in supporting countries during their INDC preparations, as well as after the Paris COP as the agreement is implemented.