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BRIEFING NOTE

Annex 2

Briefing on Intended Nationally Determined Contributions: Supporting the INDC Process in Pakistan

ECN & IISD

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This briefing note introduces the concept of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) and how this will be an important part of Pakistan's climate change efforts in the future. A programme of support has been started that will assist the Government of Pakistan to prepare its INDC in the coming months, ready for the next major climate summit in Paris at the end of 2015. That programme is coordinated by LEAD Pakistan, along with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Energy Research Centre of the Netherlands (ECN) and the Pakistan Centre for Climate Research and Development (CCRD).

Climate change negotiations - a short summary

Negotiations are currently underway to reduce greenhouse emissions and respond to climate risks to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of global warming, and adapt to changes we are already facing.

The international political response to climate change began with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The response has progressed from the Kyoto Protocol to a vision of an agreement that recognizes actions from all countries to keep temperature changes at safe levels. The new agreement is targeted to be adopted in 2015, at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP), and implemented from 2020. As part of the preparation for this agreement, countries have been invited to submit Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in advance of the COP.

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions - What are they?

During previous climate negotiations, all countries agreed to publicly outline what climate actions they intend to take in the future. When aggregated globally, these INDCs will largely determine whether the world achieves a 2015 agreement that puts us on a path toward a low-carbon future. A country's INDC should signal to the world that they are doing their part to combat climate change and limit future climate risks. (WRI 2014).

At the 20th COP in Lima last year, limited consensus was reached on the nature of information to be included in INDC submissions. At the same time, the language of the Lima Call for Climate Action leaves a lot of room for countries to set their own priorities when developing INDCs.

What the text does say is that contributions should go beyond current plans. In other words, the contribution should be incremental to ongoing/planned efforts. The hope is that these efforts, when aggregated, will be sufficient to tackle climate change globally (or at least provide a valuable starting point for increased action in the future).

More concretely, INDCs should provide information on (NewClimate 2014):

- Quantifiable reference points (e.g. base years, or reference levels if the form of the INDC is a reduction below reference)
- Time frames for implementation (e.g. the target year(s) or period)
- Scope and coverage of plans (inclusion of sectors and gases)
- Assumptions and methodology for estimating and accounting for GHGs
- Self-assessment of how the INDC is fair and ambitious, given the countries' national circumstances
- Explanation of how the INDC contributes to the objective of the Convention to hold global warming below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels
- Information on the "planning processes" (e.g. how they arrived at the INDC or how they plan to implement it)

Parties are also invited to submit details of their national adaptation plans along with their INDCs.

Development of INDCs and current best practice

In their INDCs, countries will propose the steps they will take to reduce emissions. There is therefore an urgent challenge for all countries to understand the potential contributions that they can make and formalize these into INDCs. The final form of these contributions is likely to be varied, with some different approaches discussed in Box 1. What can be said more broadly about good INDCs is that they should (WRI 2014):

- Be ambitious, leading to transformation in carbon-intensive sectors and industry;
- Be transparent, so that the level of ambition can be reviewed;
- Be equitable, so that each country does its fair share to address climate change;
- Articulate how the country is integrating climate change into other national priorities, such as sustainable development and poverty reduction, and send signals to the private sector to contribute to these efforts; and
- Clearly communicate, so domestic and international stakeholders can anticipate how these actions will contribute to global emissions reductions in the future.

Box 1: Approaches to INDCs

With no internationally agreed definition of what an INDC looks like, it has been left to individual countries to define the concept (with some international organizations offering suggestions). Several options have emerged, particularly for mitigation, including (Ecofys 2014a; 2014b):

- **Economy-wide emission limitation or reduction targets:** With a historic base year or intensity targets. Can also be sector-based or sub-national in focus. Short and/or long-term.
- **Energy Targets:** Such as efficiency, renewable expansion, or reduction of fossil fuel use.
- **Policies:** Such as introduction of carbon pricing or subsidy reform. Can reference NAMAs.
- **Projects:** Smaller in scope than policies, similar to CDM or JI initiatives, or NAMAs.
Potentially smallest in overall impact, but can build capacity for future action.

INDCs can also include international financial, technology and capacity building supports required as well as guidance on adaptation plans and actions.

Time Frame for INDCs

Countries have been requested to communicate their INDCs well in advance of the Paris COP. Those countries that are in a position to do so, should submit these contributions by the end of Q1 this year, but for many countries it will only be possible to submit preliminary information at that time. The UNFCCC Secretariat will publish INDCs as they are submitted and prepare by 1 November 2015 a synthesis report on the aggregate effect of the INDCs communicated by parties by 1 October 2015. In that sense, the target date for submitting information on INDCs is by the end of September this year.

To hit that deadline, countries will need to rapidly start on a process of understanding current and future GHG emissions, as well as appropriate options to reduce these.

What does this mean for Pakistan?

Like all parties to the UNFCCC process, Pakistan has committed to communicate an INDC in advance of the COP in Paris. This INDC will build upon previous submissions and communications by the Government of Pakistan, as well as national policies or strategies and Pakistan's unique potential and needs. Pakistan's INDC has the potential to lay out the long-term direction for emissions management and low-carbon development for the country. There is also potential to outline the long-term energy strategy for the country, while identifying areas where international support will be required.

With funding support from CDKN, the inception-phase of an INDC development process will start in February 2015. The support is intended to assist the Government of Pakistan in developing its INDC by creating an *"INDC Roadmap for Pakistan"*, laying out next steps and decision points over the coming months. This roadmap will take into account understanding of existing and ongoing work in the country, international experience on INDCs including actions of other countries as they develop their contributions, and the views of the Government of Pakistan on potential INDC end-points. The project team will also continue to track the negotiations of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) through 2015 and provide updates and analysis on the continued negotiations in advance of the Paris COP, including implications for INDCs and Pakistan specifically.

Consultation and capacity building will be a key theme with an internal workshop on INDC development as one of the project deliverables. A work plan will also be created outlining additional effort required beyond this inception phase through final communication of the completed INDC.

References

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