

## **Review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Accord**

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### **Introduction**

1. The Copenhagen Accord includes provision to review the implementation of the Accord by 2015, having regard to the ultimate goal of the UNFCCC. One of the matters to be addressed by the review is considering strengthening the long-term goal of the Accord, having regard to scientific evidence, including warming scenarios of 1.5 degrees Celsius.
2. To date, Parties have consistently referenced limiting warming to below 2 degrees. This is partly because the reference scenarios that have been prepared and included in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report have only been able to assess limiting GHG concentrations to 450ppm and temperature increases to 2 degrees. Having regard to this limitation, AOSIS requested, at the AWG-KP meeting in Vienna in August 2007, that further studies on lower warming scenarios be considered when scientific evidence was available. This request was repeated in AWG-KP conclusions in Bali in December 2007.
3. Because the Accord was not formally adopted by the CoP, there is currently no mechanism to operationalise the review or to otherwise prepare inputs into the review. This paper looks at ways to progress consideration of the 1.5 degree warming scenarios.

### **Copenhagen Accord**

4. The Copenhagen Accord includes the following statement, which represents the long-term vision of signatories to the Accord for climate change mitigation:  
  
*“To achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, we shall, recognizing the scientific view that the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius, on the basis of equity and in the context of sustainable development, enhance our long-term cooperative action to combat climate change.”*
5. The Accord concludes by requesting Parties to review the implementation of the Accord and means of strengthening the Accord. It states:  
  
*“We call for an assessment of the implementation of this Accord to be completed by 2015, including in light of the Convention’s ultimate objective. This would include consideration of strengthening the long-term goal referencing various matters presented by the science, including in relation to temperature rises of 1.5 degrees Celsius.”*
6. There is no reference in the Accord as to who should carry out the review and how it should be undertaken. Furthermore, as the Accord was not adopted by the COP, unless a specific

COP decision is taken, which seeks to carry out the same activity, there is no link between the review and the ongoing UNFCCC negotiations.

### **Options for review**

7. As noted above, the issue of considering scenarios that would limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius has already been raised in different UNFCCC bodies. As a starting point, if new scientific evidence is prepared, it will be considered by the AWG-KP. However, the difficulty is formally commissioning that evidence.
8. There are two primary bodies within the UNFCCC that could prepare a report on limiting temperature increases to 1.5 degree Celsius warming. These are:
  - the UNFCCC Secretariat; and
  - the IPCC.
9. The types of reports that could be prepared by these bodies differ due to their technical expertise. The Secretariat is more likely to conduct a review of existing scientific and socio-economic literature, and may need to engage a consultant to prepare the report. The IPCC would draw upon the research and modelling of its own independent scientists. This is likely to influence the type of report that would be able to be prepared and how it is received by Parties.

### **Request Secretariat to prepare a technical paper**

10. A request could be made by the Parties that the Secretariat prepare a technical paper on limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
11. The request could be made under a number of different agenda items already being negotiated, including:
  - in the AWG-LCA in the context of discussions about the shared vision;
  - in SBSTA under the agenda item of scientific, technological and socio-economic aspects of mitigating climate change;
  - in the AWG-KP, repeating existing language requesting the level of ambition of Annex I parties be reviewed having regard to best available scientific information.
12. It is important to note that this type of request has already been discussed in SBSTA. During the Bonn SBSTA meeting in June 2010 Parties discussed a possible request to the Secretariat to prepare, among other things, a technical paper on costs and benefits of achieving a long-term objective of limiting temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Parties noted that this would assist the most vulnerable countries prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Whilst this was supported by a number of countries, including AOSIS members, LDCs, the EU, Australia and a number of African countries, the OPEC countries, in particular Saudi Arabia and Kuwait opposed the proposal. As a result of the inability to reach consensus on this issue, no progress was made.
13. The political dynamic in the SBSTA discussions highlights the difficulty obtaining a decision on this issue. The issue is very important for those developing countries particularly vulnerable

to climate change, but these countries are also strong opponent of a number of issues that are important to OPEC, for example the role of CCS in the CDM. This means that the agenda items are linked and progress (or lack thereof) in one will affect the other.

### **IPCC Fifth Assessment Report**

14. The IPCC is in the process of preparing its fifth Assessment Report (AR5) which is due to be released in stages from 2013-2014. In the fourth Assessment Report (AR4), there were a small number of models run and reviewed for a 2 degree warming scenario. Lower temperature increases had not been modelled. It is unclear whether AR5 will be able to draw upon peer reviewed models of these lower scenarios as some scientist claim that the science on low emission scenarios is not sufficiently advanced to be included in AR5.
15. It has been suggested that if a technical paper (as contemplated above) is prepared, this would send a signal to the IPCC to include models of this lower scenario in AR5. Information about the ability to achieve these low emission scenarios is considered a threat to OPEC countries as it potentially places a constraint on fossil fuel use.
16. If peer reviewed scientific information modelling lower scenarios is available, there is no reason why it cannot be considered and referenced by the IPCC. The limitation is the number of models and their reliability compared to other warming scenarios where many more models have been run.

### **IPCC Special Report**

17. Another possible option is requesting the IPCC to prepare a special report on lower warming scenarios. The IPCC has prepared a number of special reports in the past. However, the ability to prepare reports is linked to availability of resources. If a report were to be requested, the IPCC would need to include it in its work plan and ensure it was properly resourced to carry it out. Having regard to the existing work programme, there is no guarantee that a report could be prepared before 2015.

### **Other considerations**

18. If a technical paper or report is prepared, a further issue is the extent to which Parties will be able to use and rely upon that report. When AR4 was prepared, there were difficult discussions in SBSTA and also at CoP13 in Bali as to how the report should be dealt with. Some parties were hoping to place much reliance on AR4 and the information contained therein – having a separate agenda item included to consider the report and recognising important finding in the report. In contrast, other countries were reluctant to even take note of the report.
19. Even if a paper or report is prepared, ensuring its findings are considered in a meaningful way may still be a challenge.