

SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION

INTERVENTION BY AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION ON AGENDA
ITEM

3(a): COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES INCLUDED IN ANNEX I

(I) Implementation issues

11 July 1996

Item three on our agenda, dealing with national communications, goes to the core of assessing implementation of the climate change convention by Annex I parties. This item allows the Conference of the Parties to evaluate fulfilment of convention commitments and lay the ground for making sound judgments about how most effectively we might advance achievement of the convention's ultimate objective.

The second compilation and synthesis of first national communications from Annex I parties contains several important insights into issues relevant to the implementation of commitments made by Annex I parties. We need to carefully evaluate these insights and ensure that they fully inform consideration by the COP of further commitments for Annex I parties.

The report's usefulness is unavoidably constrained by the historical nature of the data on which it is based and by the fact that the report has not been able to include data relevant to this item because of the unavailability of some national communications. It is clear that the emissions profiles for a number of parties have changed since the time of their submission of national communications, most of which were submitted in the second half of 1994. It is also regrettable that the report was not able to include performance data from a key proponent of proposals to advance implementation of the convention. The task of making a definitive assessment of the synthesis report is inhibited by these factors.

Notwithstanding those difficulties, there are a number of key issues that are raised in the synthesis report and that directly impact on meeting commitments of Annex I parties. It will be essential for SBI to note these and relay them to the AGBM and the plenary to inform the conclusions and decisions of the Conference of the Parties.

Before addressing the more substantive points relating to implementation of commitments, the Australian delegation should like to make two observations relating to the process of the review of communications. First, we look forward to improvements in the preparation of national communications - and their review - through revised guidelines being considered by SBSTA. These will help ensure greater consistency and comparability of Annex I parties' performance. Secondly, a lesson we should draw from the review process is the degree to which the non-confrontational approach has proven valuable and constructive in assessing overall progress towards implementation of the convention. This is an aspect that we should keep in mind in dealing with communications of non-Annex I parties.

Allow us, Mr Chairman, to draw out some key issues in the synthesis report that the SBI should note.

The synthesis report contains a very clear message of commitment and performance by Annex I parties with regard to the adoption of national policies and taking of corresponding measures on the mitigation of climate change. This illustrates that Annex I parties are responding to their core commitments under the convention.

The degree to which they are likely to meet the aim of returning emissions to 1990 levels by