

Indonesia's NDC bodes ill for the Paris Agreement

To the Editor — The Paris Agreement on climate change seeks to keep the increase in global temperature below 2 °C by 2100, with further efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 °C. However, the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by the Parties to the UNFCCC have been estimated to imply a global warming of 2.6–3.1 °C (ref.¹). The Agreement also states that targets for the reduction of emissions should be strengthened over time. This strengthening would obviously be required to achieve even the 2 °C target, meaning that all Parties would need to both deliver on their initial commitments and go beyond them.

A reduction in emissions from changes in land use is important for achieving the goal of the Agreement². Indonesia's emissions from land-use change are among the three highest national estimates², and it is ranked as the eighth highest global emitter over all sources³. It appeared to pledge an 'unconditional reduction target of 29% and conditional reduction target up to 41% of the business-as-usual scenario by 2030' in its NDC⁴. However, in Table 1 of the Indonesian NDC — which presents the breakdown of the sectoral contributions to emissions reductions — the total reduction in emissions amounts to 38% by 2030 (29% unconditional and 9% conditional). A reduction of 38% could be regarded as technically consistent with the stated reduction target of 'up to' 41%, but it seems contradictory for the main body of the NDC to present a commitment that is

noted by the international community^{2,5} and immediately watered down in a little-noticed accompanying table.

Countries are required to report to the UNFCCC at regular intervals to provide updates on their progress towards delivering on their commitments. The inconsistency about the emissions reduction target noted above is repeated in Indonesia's most recent national communication⁶: "The emission reduction target is set at 29% of the reference emission level by 2030 with an unconditional target and up to 41% with international support (conditional target)." However, it goes on to state: "GHG emission reduction targets by 2020 in accordance with the Presidential Regulation No. 61/2011 are 26% (unconditional) and 41% (conditional) below the national baseline emission level, while by 2030 it is targeted at 29% (unconditional) and 38% (conditional; Table 5.4)."

This inconsistency, present both in Indonesia's NDC and the Third National Communication, highlights the importance of the review process in ensuring transparency of action and support under the Paris Agreement⁷. The fact that such an important detail had gone unnoticed before now also raises the question of whether it is only the Indonesian NDC and national communication that make contradicting statements about intended contributions, or whether other countries have submitted NDCs and communications that have similar problems. To ensure transparency

and accountability⁸, all of the NDCs and national communications should be reviewed immediately and the results made available to the international community.

Finally, and most importantly, Indonesia's approach (promising a certain reduction in emissions but then planning to deliver 3% less) bodes ill for the Paris Agreement's capacity to deliver on its aim if other countries follow suit in scaling back their commitments rather than ramping them up. □

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