

**Submission of the United States of America
Adaptation Committee
25 February 2011**

The United States welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission regarding our views on the composition of and modalities and procedures for the Adaptation Committee, including its linkages with other relevant institutional arrangements. Even under the most successful scenarios for global greenhouse gas emission reductions, past and future greenhouse gas emissions will require people around the world to adapt to climate change, making the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation increasingly important. The United States supports the decision made in Cancun to establish the Adaptation Committee.

Role

It is the view of the United States that national and sub-national level institutional arrangements will be key vehicles for advancing effective, country-driven adaptation action on the ground, and that the Adaptation Committee can provide leadership in catalyzing and supporting country-driven adaptation actions. The United States fully supports the five functions that were decided upon for the Adaptation Committee under the Cancun AWG-LCA outcome. To operationalize these five functions, we propose that the Adaptation Committee focus its work plan on:

1. Promoting coherence on adaptation. Specifically, the Committee would:
 - a. Assess and propose ways to rationalize adaptation under the Convention and strengthen coherence among the various Convention bodies and agenda items that focus solely on adaptation, such as the Nairobi Work Program and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, and that include adaptation elements, such as the Technology Executive Committee and the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications. The Committee could provide guidance to the Nairobi Work Program, setting its work plans and calls to action. The Committee could also request reports from other groups under the Convention on their adaptation actions and provide guidance on actions that could be taken to strengthen coherence and integration including through the identification of joint programs.
 - b. Assess and provide guidance on how the UNFCCC could strengthen linkages with and among other institutional arrangements. Other institutional arrangements include those at the regional, national and sub-national levels, such as national and local governments, universities, civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector. Many of these institutions, especially those at the national and subnational levels, are the key vehicles for advancing effective, country-driven adaptation action on the ground. The first step in this process would be to understand what other institutional arrangements are doing on adaptation, and where there are gaps and priority areas where improved communication and coordination would help catalyze enhanced action, leverage resources, and strengthen the synthesis and sharing of information, knowledge, and best practices.
2. Providing technical guidance on adaptation. Specifically, the Committee would:

- a. Synthesize information and knowledge about good adaptation practices from existing resources, including the Nairobi Work Program, for consideration by the Conference of Parties when providing initial guidance to the operating entities of the financial mechanism. The Committee could, for example, provide guidance on how the operating entities could encourage the replication and scaling up of good practices related to mainstreaming adaptation into development planning, poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral policies; building the capacity of governments and civil society to develop and implement most effective adaptation strategies and programs; and prioritizing vulnerable systems, sectors and communities.
- b. Conduct periodic reviews about information, tools, and policies that enable effective and enhanced action on adaptation and associated lessons learned, good practices, gaps and constraints. This could be undertaken through sectoral lenses, e.g., looking at agriculture, health, water, natural ecosystems, and coastal zones as well as a cross-sectoral lens, e.g., looking at integrating adaptation into development planning and programs; access to climate information; monitoring, evaluation, and reporting; gender; and stakeholder engagement.

The Committee would fill critical gaps in knowledge, through calls to action, commissioning reports, and organizing expert meetings. By doing so, it can provide leadership in supporting and catalyzing country-driven adaptation. The Committee could, for example, draw scientific and technical expertise from the Nairobi Work Program and from the Least Developed Countries Expert Group to provide recommendations to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation on further implementing the Cancun agreements on adaptation, including the Cancun Adaptation Framework and the process for LDCs to develop and implement medium and long-term plans. It could also draw from experts outside the Convention, such as civil society and other intergovernmental organizations, to identify opportunities for – and ways to overcome constraints to – mainstreaming climate change adaptation into development planning and programs and monitoring, evaluating and reporting on climate resilience, adaptive capacity, and climate finance.

Composition

To function effectively and efficiently, the Committee should be relatively small in size. We propose, therefore, that the Adaptation Committee be comprised of 14 senior, high profile members from Parties to the Convention acting in their expert capacity, with equal representation between developed and developing country Parties, taking account the need to achieve gender balance. Party members of the Adaptation Committee will be nominated by Parties and elected by the Conference of Parties.

To function effectively and efficiently, the Committee should also leverage adaptation expertise outside the Convention. We propose that the Adaptation Committee also include six non-governmental advisory members, including from civil society, financial institutions, and United Nations agencies. These advisory members should have expertise in the implementation of adaptation activities.

In addition, the Adaptation Committee should be able to invite experts who bring in relevant expertise as needed, and to establish task-focused ad hoc working groups. The Committee should engage a wider range of expertise, given the diversity of challenges that adaptation poses. For example, if the Committee were to focus on information, knowledge, lessons learned, good practices, gaps and constraints related to agriculture and adaptation, it could bring together an ad hoc working group of experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization and other relevant intergovernmental agencies, civil society and the private sector. Or, if it held a workshop or meeting on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, the Committee could invite experts from civil society and OECD's Development Assistance Committee, for example, who are working on monitoring, evaluation and reporting from different perspectives and scales.

Modalities and Procedures

The Adaptation Committee should report to the Conference of the Parties through the Subsidiary Bodies. It should provide periodic reports on the progress of its work to the Conference of the Parties through the Subsidiary Bodies and, upon their request, advice to the Subsidiary Bodies on matters related to its core functions. This reporting relationship makes use of, and recognizes the authority of, existing bodies – and the importance of oversight of the Committee by the Parties. The Subsidiary Bodies may draw from these reports in drafting their conclusions. These conclusions could then be included in decisions of the Conference of the Parties. Decisions by the Conference of the Parties would in turn guide the work of the Adaptation Committee.

The Adaptation Committee will make decisions by consensus of Party Members.

Party members and advisory members should serve a term of two years and should be eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of office. Half the members should be elected initially for a term of three years and half the members should be elected for a term of two years. Thereafter, the Conference of the Parties should elect every year members for a term of two years. Members should remain in office until their successors are elected.

The Adaptation Committee should annually elect a chair and a vice-chair from among its members for a term of two years each, per the two-year work program cycle, with one being a member from a Party included in Annex I to the Convention and the other being a member from a Party not included in Annex I to the Convention. Positions of chair and vice-chair should alternate annually between a member from a Party included in Annex I to the Convention and a member from a Party not included in Annex I to the Convention.

The Adaptation Committee should meet twice a year in conjunction with meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies. To ensure transparency, meetings should be open to accredited observer organizations, except where otherwise decided by the Adaptation Committee.

The Committee should be supported by the Secretariat as needed and within budget.

Progress and performance of the Committee should be reviewed after two years and periodically thereafter.