

Report on the UNFCCC/IPCC expert meeting on vulnerability and adaptation methodologies

*Lisbon,
August 10, 2000*

Mandate

At its twelfth session, the SBSTA encouraged the secretariat to continue its work on collecting and disseminating information on the methods and tools to assess climate change impacts and adaptation, and noted that further action is needed to improve the quality of information, and to enhance the capability of developing country Parties to make the best use of available methods and tools.

The SBSTA also requested the secretariat, in coordination with the IPCC, to organize a meeting of experts to explore: (a) Options to improve the compilation and review, and to facilitate the dissemination, of information on methodologies, including development of an extended compendium of methods and tools; (b) The feasibility of a joint workshop on impacts and adaptation methodologies after the Working Group II Third Assessment Report of the IPCC is approved/accepted. It invited the secretariat to provide information on the results of the expert meeting at its thirteenth session.

Scope of the meeting

In response to the above mandate, a meeting was held in conjunction with the IPCC WGII Lead Authors meeting in Lisbon on August 10, 2000. Thirteen experts and five representatives of the IPCC secretariat and WGII technical support unit took part in the meeting. List of participants is provided in the annex to this document. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: (1) to discuss the feasibility of a joint UNFCCC/IPCC workshop on impacts and adaptation after acceptance of the WGII report, and (2) to provide advice on improving UNFCCC's efforts to compile, review and disseminate methods for assessment of impacts and adaptation.

Dr. T. Downing of the University of Oxford agreed to serve as a chairperson for the meeting. The secretariat made an introductory presentation, which included mandate, background information and identified issues regarding possible further work by the secretariat on impacts and adaptation methodologies. Four main issues relevant to the mandate were identified for consideration at the meeting. They are the following:

- (a) Would it be feasible and useful to conduct a workshop with cooperation with IPCC on this matter, and if so what would be the scope and focus of the workshop?
- (b) How to enhance the exchange of information and improve its quality in the UNFCCC methodological data base?
- (c) What procedure could be used to review the methods?
- (d) What are the main issues related to the capacity building in this area?

Summary of the discussion.

Workshop on methodologies in cooperation with IPCC.

The participants of the meeting supported the idea of a meeting with participation of IPCC experts, but only after the release of the IPCC Third Assessment Report (TAR), in April 2001.

It was advised that in addition to technical experts, the participants should also include the user community, particularly focal points from developing countries responsible for national communications. The scope of the workshop would explore:

- The experiences of developing countries in applying current methods and their emerging needs;
- Current state of the art to adaptation information/methods identified in the IPCC report, and
- Options for preparing the quality and dissemination of information on adaptation methods.

Options to enhance the exchange of the information, and improve its quality

The meeting participants suggested that in order to improve the flow and quality of the information on methodologies, it would be useful to:

- clearly define the scope, context and focus of the methodological work, including: (1) a purpose and specific objectives of the work and the database; (2) tasks which the methodologies are to address (e.g. research or policy questions, etc.); (3) users of the methodologies (e.g. technical teams, policy-makers, negotiators, etc.). The focus of the methodologies should be demand-driven. The SBSTA or COP survey, or a workshop with participation of technical experts and Parties could be used in this regard.
- focus on methodologies on adaptation, including both sectoral methods and methods to assess broad adaptation strategies and adaptive capacity;
- develop a more evaluative approach to the methods listed and described in the database. This should reflect the value of the methods for particular purposes, for example, some methods could be useful at a broad policy level of debate, others for specific project evaluation etc. It was suggested also to provide more detailed examples of the applications of the methods showing the benefits and difficulties that were encountered and how they were dealt with.
- ensure the UNFCCC effort linked connected to relevant UNFCCC and other organizations' activities in his area. Specific suggestions in this regard included: (a) to coordinate the UNFCCC effort with the further development of the UNEP Handbook on V&A assessment, and (b) to take into account the information of the IPCC Guidance Paper on Cross Cutting Issues in the future work on methodologies.

The procedure to review the methods

The participants of the meeting advised that the review process should:

- ensure comparability and validity of the methodologies. Criteria and purpose for review need to be clearly identified;

- be actively managed and include peer- reviewing of methodologies, receiving feedback from both the authors and users of the methods; discovering problems and considering possible solutions, providing examples, and updating the consideration. Practically it could be implemented in a form of a web-communication tool;
- involve UNFCCC roster of experts, academies, SBSTA meetings. It would be useful to include the UNFCCC secretariat as a client of GEF, soliciting a report back to the secretariat on the use models/tool within different assistance programs.

Capacity building issues

The experts recognized that the capacity to use methodologies on adaptation has to be built in developing countries. They noted that to be most efficient the capacity building effort should ensue that:

- tools and methods are appropriate for the particular country, sector, or region and address their priority. For example, it was pointed out that complex methods and tools for assessment of technologies for adaptation are not needed in many countries, rather the framework for assessing adaptive capacity and general thinking about adaptation to reduce vulnerability is necessary;
- it is focused on the institutions and people that are (a) qualified enough to be able to accommodate the effort, and (b) linked to the climate community of a country.

Annex

List of participants

Experts/WGII Lead authors: I. Burton (Canada), S. Hug (Bangladesh), M. Campos (Costa-Rica), T. Downing (UK), S. Diaz (Argentina), R. Klein (Germany), E. Niang (Senegal), S. Schneider (USA), J. Smith (USA), B. Smit (Canada), F. Toth (Germany), G. Yohe (USA), R. Warrick (New Zealand)

IPCC: N. Sundararaman (The secretary of IPCC), R. Christ (IPCC secretariat), O. Canziani (Co-chair WGII), N. Leary (Head of WGII TSU), K. White (WGII TSU)

UNFCCC secretariat: O. Pilifosova.