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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention

First workshop

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Dialogue working paper 11 (2006)

Submission from Iceland*

* This submission was submitted on 18 April 2006 and has been electronically imported in order to make it available on electronic systems, including the World Wide Web. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the text as submitted.

ICELAND

SUBJECT: VIEWS REGARDING THE DIALOGUE ON LONG-TERM COOPERATIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE BY ENHANCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has achieved considerable success since its adoption in 1994, in setting up the framework for action to mitigate climate change and prepare for adaptation. Still, the best available scientific evidence suggests that human-induced climate change continues at a rate that could have serious consequences. Greenhouse gas emissions also continue to rise globally, even if many countries have taken successful action to reduce emissions or slow down their rate of increase. Future discussions and action must look at ways to accelerate action to mitigate climate change.

Iceland firmly believes that combatting climate change is a global challenge that requires a shared commitment and international action, in addition to efforts undertaken by individual countries. Developed countries should continue to take the lead, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, but they can not work alone. Emissions from Annex B countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol are less than 30 per cent of global emissions, and that share is declining. Further cuts by those countries will be a crucial part of a new post-2012 regime of commitments, but progress must also be made towards the stabilization of emissions in countries responsible for 70% of emissions. Ways should be found to assist and enhance efforts by developing countries to support the ultimate objective of the Convention in a way that does not reduce their capacity to alleviate poverty and develop their economy.

In an globalised economy it is evident that individual Governments can not tackle the problem of climate change except by cooperating with business and other members of civil society, as well as with other Governments. While Governments will continue to bear the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the Convention, ways should be found to increase the effective participation of industry, and enhance the capacity of different sectors to reduce emissions.

The decision establishing the dialogue specifies some areas in which Parties should exchange experiences and analyse strategic approaches for long-term cooperative action to address climate change, namely:

- a) Advancing development goals in a sustainable way
- b) Addressing action on adaptation
- c) Realising the full potential of technology
- d) Realising the full potential of market-based opportunities.

Iceland would like to suggest some issues that might be discussed under these respective headings:

Advancing development goals in a sustainable way

For developing countries, alleviating poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals are of primary importance. The discussions under this area should aim to identify win-win solutions, where development and mitigating climate change support each other. An important part of this is supporting the utilization of clean and renewable energy, especially in developing countries. It would be useful to map the potential of renewable energy in developing countries, assess their cost-effectiveness, and identify the obstacles for their utilization. This should lead to the drafting of plans to concentrate efforts by countries and development agencies to bring clean energy to those lacking modern energy services, as well as those using polluting energy sources. The huge investments in energy infrastructure

foreseen in the coming years and decades should go to the cleanest forms of energy to the extent that this is feasible and cost-effective, taking long-term considerations and externalities into account.

Realising the full potential of technology

Iceland believes that technology is perhaps the single most important factor in mitigating climate change. This applies both to existing low-carbon technologies, that could be used more widely, and new and emerging climate-friendly technologies, that could be brought into use earlier than presently envisaged by increased emphasis on research, demonstration projects, technology transfer etc. It could be useful to identify best practices in this area, and look at ways to improve international financing and legal frameworks to encourage investment in clean technologies. It should also be considered to look specifically at some key sectors and industries, and ask experts to assess their potential for greenhouse gas mitigation through existing and emerging cleaner technologies, economic instruments, and the setting of industry standards, benchmarking and the sharing of best available technology and practices.

Realising the full potential of market-based opportunities

Included here could be an analysis of negative and positive effects of subsidies and taxes on climate change mitigation in general and the development and dissemination of low-carbon technologies in particular. It could also be useful to analyse existing and emerging GHG emission trading schemes, and their possible linking.

In addition to the themes mentioned under the headings above, Iceland believes that it would be useful to discuss the future development of LULUCF, with a view to increase the contribution by this sector on emission reductions and carbon sequestration. The aim would be to acknowledge further importance of preserving carbon stocks in terrestrial ecosystems and to identify synergies with the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Desertification.
