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Implementation of Article 4, paragraphs 8 and 9, of the Convention

Matters relating to the least developed countries

**Report on the eleventh meeting of the
Least Developed Countries Expert Group**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

This document reports on the eleventh meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, from 26 to 28 March 2007. It provides a response to decision 4/CP.11, which requests the LEG to develop a work programme that includes the implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). It also provides a response to the request made by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, at its twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions, to be kept informed by the LEG of its efforts to implement the work programme over the biennium 2006–2007, and gives an update on the efforts of the LEG to convene a meeting to take stock of the progress made by Parties in the preparation and implementation of NAPAs.

* This document was submitted after the due date as a result of the timing of the meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. MANDATE	1–3	3
II. SUMMARY OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES EXPERT GROUP	4–36	3
A. Review of the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action	6–14	3
B. Consideration of efforts to facilitate preparation of the national adaptation programmes of action	15–17	5
C. Consideration of the work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and its expected outcomes	18–23	5
D. Planning for the Least Developed Countries Expert Group stocktaking meeting	24–27	6
E. Interaction of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group with national adaptation programme of action teams of the Maldives, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu	28–36	6

Annex

Members of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group as at 31 March 2007	8
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I. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 29/CP.7, established the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to advise on the preparation and implementation strategy for national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), and adopted its terms of reference. According to these terms of reference, the LEG is to convene its meeting twice each year, and report on its work to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

2. By its decision 4/CP.11, the COP decided to extend the mandate of the LEG under its original terms of reference and to review, at its thirteenth session, the progress, need for continuation and terms of reference of the group, and to adopt a decision thereon. At its ninth meeting, the LEG developed a work programme for 2006–2007,¹ which was considered by the SBI at its twenty-fourth session. The LEG was requested to keep the SBI informed of its efforts to implement the work programme over the biennium 2006–2007, in accordance with its mandate, by including in its subsequent reports information on expected outcomes.

3. The SBI, at its twenty-fifth session, expressed its appreciation to the LEG for its good work in implementing its work programme; encouraged it to seek to ensure the complementarity of its activities with related efforts by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies; requested it to convene a meeting, with the assistance of the secretariat and subject to the availability of resources, to take stock of the progress made by Parties in NAPA preparation and implementation; and to consult, through the secretariat, on input for this meeting from the secretariat of the GEF and its implementing agencies, and to report on the outcomes of the meeting to the SBI at its twenty-seventh session.²

II. Summary of the eleventh meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

4. The eleventh meeting of the LEG was hosted by the Government of Solomon Islands and held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, from 26 to 28 March 2007. The Governments of Belgium, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and Norway provided financial support for the meeting.

5. The LEG continued its efforts to implement its work programme in accordance with its mandate. Its eleventh meeting focused on reviewing the NAPA preparation and implementation process; considered efforts that support Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the preparation of NAPAs; elaborated on further activities in support of the implementation of its work programme; interacted with representatives of the NAPA teams of the Maldives, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu; and planned its stocktaking meeting.

A. Review of the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action

1. Status of preparation

6. The information available to the LEG indicated that 44 NAPA proposals have been approved for funding by the GEF. Of these, 14 have been completed and submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat as at 31 March 2007. The list of submitted NAPAs is available on the UNFCCC website at: <<http://unfccc.int/adaptation/napas/items/2679.php>>.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2006/9, annex I.

² FCCC/SBI/2006/28, paragraphs 81–86.

7. Since September 2006, five of the LDC Parties in the process of preparing their NAPAs have submitted draft NAPAs, one of which was in Portuguese, to the LEG for comments, in accordance with decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9. It was noted during the eleventh LEG meeting that the group was unable to provide timely feedback on the draft NAPA in Portuguese owing to the resignation of the Portuguese-speaking LEG member.

8. The LEG discussed the status of preparation of NAPAs, on the basis of its survey at COP 12, information from LDC Parties and updated information from GEF implementing agencies. The LEG noted that several NAPAs were at an advanced stage of preparation and that NAPA teams continue to need support, particularly in relation to steps 2 (synthesize available vulnerability assessments) and 8 (develop project profiles and submit the completed NAPA) of the NAPA process.³

9. The LEG discussed its ongoing efforts to collaborate with the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT), and efforts of the UNFCCC in response to the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, and the Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures contained in decision 1/CP.10. It also considered the complementary efforts of other United Nations agencies in support of LDCs and NAPAs, and welcomed the collaboration on the development of a response to disaster risk reduction in LDCs.

10. The LEG concluded that these efforts should continue, particularly as they relate to the fulfilment of its mandate. The Chair of the LEG was invited to consult with the Chairs of the CGE and EGTT at the twenty-sixth sessions of the subsidiary bodies on training in the use of the guidebook on preparing and presenting proposals that was developed by the UNFCCC in collaboration with the EGTT,⁴ the assessment of adaptation technology needs of NAPAs and a report on integrating the results of NAPAs into second national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention.

2. Least Developed Countries Expert Group comments on draft national adaptation programmes of action

11. In accordance with decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (a), the LEG provided comments on the draft NAPAs of Benin, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, and Tuvalu.

12. The LEG reviewed the results of its efforts to improve its responsiveness to requests, noting that several NAPA teams had provided a positive response to its comments. The LEG noted that project profiles continued to be presented in varying levels of detail, and that the linkage between steps 2 and 8 continues to engage the attention of NAPA teams.

13. The LEG considered support to the Portuguese-speaking NAPA team that had submitted its draft NAPA for comments and agreed that a LEG member would provide comments on the draft NAPA on behalf of the group.

14. The LEG noted the efforts of the implementing agencies of the GEF, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with technical support from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to provide technical advice on completing NAPAs. It took particular note of the NAPA website <<http://www.napa-pana.org>>, which serves to communicate to all users information such as its feedback

³ Annotated guidelines for the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action, available at: <http://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/ldc/application/pdf/annguide.pdf>.

⁴ Preparing and presenting proposals: A guidebook on preparing technology transfer projects for financing, available at: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/pract_guide_06_en.pdf>.

on draft NAPAs to NAPA teams, the information provided to the NAPA team leaders by UNEP in its technical note no. 4 and UNITAR's revised technical sheets on steps 2 and 8 of the NAPA process.

B. Consideration of efforts to facilitate preparation of the national adaptation programmes of action

15. The Chair of the LEG briefed the group on the discussions at SBI 25 with representatives of the implementing agencies of the GEF, UNEP and UNDP, with technical support from UNITAR, to assist Parties in the NAPA process, to address the capacity-building needs for NAPAs and to further facilitate support provided for the development of project proposals for funding.

16. The LEG was advised of the schedule of activities proposed by UNITAR in support of NAPA preparation for 2007. It was noted that a NAPA training workshop for LDCs and small island developing States (SIDS) in the Asia Pacific region, which had been discussed at the margins of SBI 25, was scheduled to follow LEG 11 in Honiara from 29 to 31 March 2007.

17. The NAPA workshop for LDC Parties in the Asia region initially proposed to take place in 2006 was discussed and a new date proposed for the third quarter of 2007. The training workshop is designed to assist LDCs in the Asia region that have started the NAPA preparation and are in need of technical advice and guidance in order to progress further.

C. Consideration of the work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and its expected outcomes

18. The work programme of the LEG was further considered by the LEG at its eleventh meeting on the basis of the organization of the work agreed at its tenth meeting. Five task teams were established at LEG 10; each was led by a LEG member to coordinate efforts to implement its mandate.

19. The discussion on the LEG work programme 2006–2007 was guided by technical reports containing a compilation and synthesis of information contained in 11 NAPAs submitted to the secretariat as at 31 January 2007, namely from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Comoros, Djibouti, Haiti, Kiribati, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger and Samoa. The technical reports were based on two templates designed by the LEG to extract information from the NAPAs on the application of the NAPA guidelines contained in the annex to decision 28/CP.7, and to compile information on prioritized projects and activities contained in the project profiles.

20. One of the technical reports, in an effort to assist the LEG in improving and facilitating support to LDCs that have yet to submit their NAPAs, served to identify problems encountered by the LDCs in their use of the guidelines. The second technical report compiled and synthesized information provided in submitted NAPAs, with particular reference to the project profiles. The two reports also identified problems encountered by the LDCs during the preparation of NAPAs and assessed the financial, technical and technological assistance requirements as well as the capacity-building needed for the implementation of NAPA projects.

21. In addition, in the context of considering its work programme, the LEG examined updated information from NAPA teams and the implementing agencies on technical constraints being encountered in the preparation of NAPAs, as well as information on financial and technical needs and support that can assist NAPA implementation.

22. The outcome of the LEG's consideration of its work programme was to identify elements that would need to be considered in preparation for its stocktaking meeting, through the production of background papers, in plenary sessions organized around the activities mandated in decision 29/CP.7 and in related open discussions.

23. The LEG agreed to further consider and report to the SBI, at its twenty-seventh session, on the fulfilment of its mandate on the basis of work it has undertaken and results gathered from the stocktaking meeting.

D. Planning for the Least Developed Countries Expert Group stocktaking meeting

24. At its eleventh meeting, the LEG agreed that the main objectives of the stocktaking meeting would be to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the status of NAPA preparation; to facilitate the sharing of experiences in NAPA preparation and implementation; to identify best practices in NAPA preparation; to guide project implementation; and to consider how best to mainstream NAPA activities into national development planning.

25. Drawing upon the work undertaken in the task teams, the two technical reports, the results of its questionnaires and a scoping paper, the LEG began the process of considering the elements to be discussed at the meeting by describing the inputs it would provide. It also considered inputs to the meeting that would be required from the GEF and its implementing agencies, identifying capacity-building needs as well as expected contributions from relevant actors to assist in the conduct of the meeting.

26. The Chair of the LEG was requested to consult further with relevant actors in detailing arrangements for the meeting. The LEG agreed to provide to its Chair additional inputs for the meeting, based on the work being undertaken in reviewing submitted NAPAs, or on further interactions with NAPA teams.

27. The LEG also requested the Chair of the LEG to have further discussions, at the margins of SBI 26, with the GEF and its implementing agencies, relevant United Nations agencies, regional initiatives, and multilateral and bilateral support agencies that support LDCs in the NAPA process.

E. Interaction of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group with national adaptation programme of action teams of the Maldives, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

28. The LEG, on the last day of its meeting, conducted an open interactive session with representatives of the NAPA teams that were in the Solomon Islands to participate in the training workshop referred to in paragraph 16. Inputs to the interaction between the LEG and the NAPA teams were also provided by technical resource personnel representing the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the UNDP regional office based in Samoa, and UNITAR representatives responsible for the conduct of the workshop.

29. The NAPA team representatives indicated that they are at varying stages of NAPA preparation and that three draft NAPAs would be considered at the workshop.

30. One NAPA team indicated that it was in the final process of incorporating comments from the LEG on its draft NAPA in order to submit it for endorsement by its government. Another two indicated that they were well advanced in the process, with nearly completed documents to be considered at the workshop, which included project profiles proposed for funding. The fourth team indicated that, after protracted discussions, it was still in the process of finalizing the national institutional arrangements with its implementing agency to start the implementation of the approved NAPA document.

31. The NAPA teams, in presenting their overview, briefed the LEG on the status of preparation of their NAPA as well as on problems and constraints encountered in the NAPA process. They indicated that institutional arrangements, stakeholder consultations and efforts to undertake steps 2 and 8 of the NAPA process are still engaging their attention.

32. On the issue of the proposed national institutional arrangements, one team indicated that the proposed modifications to an approved NAPA project document are delaying the initiation of the implementation of their NAPA.
33. Discussions included the particular challenges of undertaking stakeholder consultations that would involve national, regional and government agencies as well as local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector across island groups such as the Solomon Islands. It was noted that the NAPA process recommends that consultations need to be based on a representative sampling of affected communities at the national, sectoral and local community level of islands and communities.
34. With respect to step 2 of the NAPA process, the identification, from available vulnerability assessments, of the vulnerable sectors and the root cause of their vulnerability to climate change presents a challenge, as different biogeographic regions are represented within countries in the SIDS. It was noted that the regions include both low-lying atolls and high volcanic islands, and that existing vulnerability studies often do not differentiate between the regions with regard to vulnerability and expected impacts.
35. The development of project profiles (step 8) based on the constraints faced in step 2 had progressed, but it was noted that the comments received, for example, from the LEG, highlight the problems in the linkages between the two steps.
36. The regional support agencies involved in the LDCs and SIDS of the Asia Pacific region that participated in the open exchange indicated their continuing willingness and desire to assist, upon request, at the regional or, as needed, at the national level, the NAPA teams in their NAPA process.

Annex

**Members of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group
as at 31 March 2007**

Mr. Erwin Kuenzi	Austria
Mr. Mahmood H. Khan	Bangladesh
Mr. Karma L. Rapten	Bhutan
Ms. Michelle Campbell ¹	Canada
Ms. Elizabeth Harvey	Canada
Mr. Bubu Pateh Jallow	Gambia
Mr. Samuel Raboqha	Lesotho
Mr. Benjamin S. Karmorh	Liberia
Mr. Ahmed Jameel	Maldives
Ms. Madeleine Rose Diouf-Sarr ¹	Senegal
Mr. Chanel Iroi	Solomon Islands
Mr. Fred Machulu Onduri	Uganda

¹ Also a member of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention.