



# Climate Action Network International Submission on the Adaptation Committee

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*Climate Action Network – International is a coalition of 550 environmental and development non-governmental organizations worldwide committed to limiting human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.*

## **The Adaptation Framework and the role of the Adaptation Committee**

The adoption of the Cancun Adaptation Framework provides an important step forward for treating adaptation under the Convention in a more coherent, consistent and effective manner.

CAN International sees the agreement to establish the Adaptation Committee as an important basis to increase the effectiveness and coherence of adaptation work in the UNFCCC process. Based on the best available knowledge, science and experience, it should play a key role to promote synergy and coherence as well as to facilitate the effective implementation of the Cancun Adaptation Framework and to provide clear recommendations to fill identified gaps in support.

## **Composition of the Adaptation Committee**

The role of the Adaptation Committee is to encourage and facilitate effective implementation of adaptation, a field which encompasses many aspects, and the balance of membership should reflect this breadth of disciplines. The Committee's activities should not become politicized. Hence, the composition of the Committee should be based on relevant expertise and extend beyond government representatives and negotiators, to draw on experts in particular from academia and civil society. Parties should be encouraged to nominate senior experts on social development, rural development, sustainable agriculture/ food security, freshwater security, coastal protection, disaster risk management, and capacity building among others, with a view to achieving a balance of expertise relevant to the Committee's work. All Parties can nominate candidates to the COP Bureau. The COP Bureau will propose to the COP the members of the Adaptation Committee, ensuring the agreed balance in representations per group of countries, with regard to gender and ensuring the balance in capacities and expertise needed for the appropriate functioning of the Adaptation Committee.

We would suggest a membership of around 20 members with, for example, seven from AI, two from each of the developing world UN regions Africa, Asia and the Group of Latin American Countries and the Caribbean, one from LDCs and one from SIDS.

To harness expertise from outside the governments, there would be one representative from IGO and additional ones (e.g. 5 to 7) from recognised constituencies under UNFCCC, including Environment NGOs (ENGO), Research NGOs (RINGOs) and indigenous peoples' organisations (IPO). These representatives would be chosen from a self-selection process for each constituency, taking into account gender balance.

## **Modalities**

### **I. The Adaptation Committee's relationship to the Parties**

A key role of the Committee is to ensure that Parties have access to technical support and advice. The role of the Adaptation Committee would be to carry this out through ensuring Parties are accessing information on good practice from a wide range of existing sources and institutions – communities in their own countries, regional centres, NGOs, universities, UN bodies. Para 33 of 1/CP.16, is relevant here. All Parties have an obligation to

provide information, “on experiences, lessons learned, and challenges and gaps in the delivery of support with a view to ensuring transparency and accountability, and encouraging best practices”.

The main functions of the Adaptation Committee are about oversight and coordination of the various but fragmented and currently inadequate strands of support for adaptation, technical, scientific and financial, currently available under and beyond the UNFCCC.

CAN is of the view that the Adaptation Committee should have the possibility to report directly to the COP, in order to enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of the process. This does not mean that the Subsidiary Bodies cannot be used as a forum for discussing recommendations prepared by the Committee. This is for example the case in the Adaptation Fund Board, which is under the authority of the CMP and formally reports directly to the CMP. Nevertheless, SB sessions are usually used to exchange on the work of the AFB.

## II. Relationship between technical institutions/programmes under the UNFCCC and the Adaptation Committee

For the performance of functions a), b) and e) in para 20 of 1/CP 16, the input of the existing expert groups is crucial. Three such groups are of particular relevance here:

- The **Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)**, has developed particular knowledge for the LDC context, including the development of NAPAs and in the future, implied through para 15 of 1/CP.16, for the NAPA plus process. Since the LEG mandate is limited to work with LDCs, it would be the responsibility of the Adaptation Committee to make relevant aspects of this knowledge and experience available to non-LDC developing countries. The knowledge from the LEG is both about national adaptation planning as well as the identification of concrete adaptation projects (like in the NAPAs).
- **Consultative Group of Experts (CGE)**: the key role of the CGE is to provide technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of National Communications, which includes also reporting on vulnerability, adaptation, support received etc. This group could contribute information and experience relevant to adaptation that has been gathered in the National Communications process.
- **Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT)**: the key role of EGTT has been to provide scientific and technical advice to advance the development and transfer of environmentally friendly technologies under the Convention. The EGTT’s mandate expired in Cancun and it will be replaced by the Technology Executive Committee (see V.). Nevertheless, the Adaptation Committee should build on the work of the EGTT to promote development and dissemination of appropriate adaptation technologies to the developing countries.

Furthermore, the knowledge gathered through the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) will be an important input to the work of the Adaptation Committee and in particular to functions b) and e). The **Nairobi Work Programme** is going to be extended. It has been a useful but imperfect vehicle for providing scientific and technical support to Parties, and there is scope for improving how it works in the future. Its future mandate should enable close working with the Adaptation Committee on filling the gaps in adaptation support, and in knowledge management of the experiences on implementation of adaptation of the NWP’s extensive range of partners. Depending on its specific design, the *work programme on loss and damage* may need to link into the work of the Adaptation Committee, for example in order to provide information and guidance on the overall adaptation need, costs and the limits of adaptation for particular Parties or contexts.

## III. Relationship of the Adaptation Committee with stakeholders outside the UNFCCC

Function c) establishes that the Adaptation Committee should promote synergy and strengthen the engagement of national, regional and international organisations, centres and networks. This includes an *input* from these stakeholders into the work of the Committee, as well as *inputs, advice, requests* from the Adaptation Committee to these stakeholders; this exchanging of information and experiences may require some formal structure to ensure adequate liaison between the various organisations.

The Committee should be required to seek input from intergovernmental and international organisations and the private sector and also from civil society, in particular from international non-government organisations and women rights organizations. It should be enabled to invite advisors from these groups to participate in meetings as experts.

#### **IV. Relationship between the Standing Committee on Finance and the Adaptation Committee**

1/CP.16 established a Standing Committee on Finance. While the details for the operationalisation of this committee still have to be worked out, it seems clear that when the Adaptation Committee provides recommendations for the COP on means of implementation *linked to adaptation* that there may be information/input from the Standing Committee on Finance which should be taken into account. This can of course also be a result of a specific request for information from the Adaptation Committee to the standing committee.

#### **V. The Technology Executive Committee and the Adaptation Committee**

The Technology Executive Committee (TEC) was established in Cancun as one element of the Technology Mechanism. It is to facilitate the implementation of the Convention with regard to technologies, including technologies for adaptation. The Adaptation Committee should take into account the work and syntheses provided by the TEC on issues related to adaptation technologies (in particular in functions b) and e)). Similarly, the Adaptation Committee should be able to request information or support from the TEC on the development and the dissemination of adaptation technologies.

#### **VI. The Adaptation Committee and reporting to the COP on means of implementation**

According to function d) the Adaptation Committee has to provide information and recommendations to the COP on means of implementation. For this, the input of and coordination with the Standing Committee on Finance as well as of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) are crucial, since these are bodies which directly deal with means of implementation and how they are handled under the UNFCCC. More specifically, the reporting to the COP should include a mandated biennial report from the Adaptation Committee to the COP on the state of adaptation action, best practice, needs and gaps.

#### **VII. The Adaptation Committee and elements of the financial mechanism**

According to function d) the provided information and recommendation to the COP should be used when the COP gives guidance to the Operating Entities of the Financial Mechanism. This implies that the Adaptation Committee has no mandate to turn directly to the Operating Entities of the Financial Mechanism. Currently the GEF is an operating entity of the financial mechanism, and in the future the Green Climate Fund will also belong to this category once it is fully operationalised.

However, it seems reasonable to interpret this function to mean that the Adaptation Committee can provide recommendations on the performance of the different funds and other elements of the financial mechanism (such as bilateral climate finance) *through* the COP. In our view, this would allow the Adaptation Committee to exchange views with the funds (or their boards) and undertake its own assessments of the performance of these funds from which to draw recommendations. However, it has no mandate to give direct guidance to them.

#### **VIII. Engagement of stakeholders and openness to observers**

It is essential for the Adaptation Committee to engage actively and meaningfully with non-members of the AC, in particular from civil society, as part of an overall transparent and inclusive working mode. Civil society organizations have been working on the ground in all fields of adaptation and climate-resilient development for many years and, in many cases, work alongside or represent affected communities. The input from civil society will greatly benefit the effectiveness of the Adaptation Committee and contribute to its legitimacy and credibility moving forward. In order to have the most productive engagement of civil society, we suggest that:

1. All meetings of the Adaptation Committee be open to all accredited observers of the UNFCCC and be webcast;

2. All documents to be discussed at Adaptation Committee meetings be translated into the five official UN languages and posted to a website; and
3. Specific time should be dedicated for the Adaptation Committee members to dialogue with civil society during the meetings.

In addition, we propose that the Adaptation Committee holds a biennial international conference, possibly in concert with other IGOs, NGOs, private sector etc. This would be an opportunity to share/highlight best practices, create new initiatives, and (above all) raise the profile of adaptation as part of the international climate change regime.

The key challenge for the Adaptation Committee in this set-up will be to work in an effective way. It must build on a range of experience and information provided by different actors, none of whom perform the full range of functions that the Adaptation Committee now has to undertake, but it can build on the existing work and thereby concentrate on *how* to make best use of it in performing its work.

The Adaptation Committee must identify gaps in adaptation information, research and support available. To be effective, it must make specific requests to the other actors, where this would be more efficient than the Adaptation Committee addressing these requests itself.

We see an important part of the oversight role of the Adaptation Committee is evaluating on-going work on adaptation, in relation to the support Parties are receiving, and make recommendations for further action to the COP, SBI and SBSTA, including identifying gaps, and reporting on them.