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Matters relating to the least developed countries

Progress report of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The fifth meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group was held at Maputo, Mozambique, from 22 to 24 March 2004. As this was the first meeting of the group in its second term, the proceedings centered around concluding a comprehensive work programme for the biennium 2004–2005.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 29/CP.7, established the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) for a period of two years, and decided to review, at its ninth session, the progress, need for continuation and terms of reference of the group. By its decision 7/CP.9, the COP decided to extend the mandate of the LEG under its original terms of reference and to review the progress, need for continuation and terms of reference of the group at its eleventh session.
2. The terms of reference of the LEG stipulate that the LEG shall meet twice each year and that its function is to advise on the preparation and implementation strategy for national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). In response to an offer by the Government of Mozambique, the fifth meeting of the group was held at Maputo, Mozambique, from 22 to 24 March 2004. The meeting resulted in the election of new officers and the establishment of a new work programme for the LEG.
3. Upon an initiative by the focal point of Mozambique, the group also devoted a session to interacting with the NAPA team of Mozambique. Both the LEG and the NAPA team benefited from the questions and feedback during this direct interaction, and the LEG plans similar sessions with other NAPA teams whenever the chance may arise in the future.

B. Scope of the note

4. This note summarizes the proceedings and outcome of the fifth meeting of the LEG. The current members of the LEG are listed in the annex.

II. Operational issues

5. In accordance with paragraph 5 of the LEG terms of reference, the LEG is to elect annually a Chair, a Vice-Chair and two rapporteurs from among its least developed country (LDC) members. At the fifth meeting of the LEG, the following officers were elected for a term of one year:
 - (a) Mr. Laavasa Malua: Chair
 - (b) Mr. Fred Onduri: Vice-Chair
 - (c) Mr. Puroshottam Kunwar: Anglophone Rapporteur
 - (d) Ms. Madeleine Diouf: Francophone Rapporteur.

III. Work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group for 2004–2005

6. The LEG noted that least developed countries were at varying stages of the NAPA preparation process. Whereas some had gone as far as the participatory assessment of their vulnerability to climate change, others had not yet started the preparation process. It was acknowledged that during the second term of the LEG, advice on the preparation of NAPAs should continue to be offered, focusing in particular on the elements which were identified during the previous term to require more work, and guidance on the implementation strategy of NAPAs should also be initiated, in line with the mandate given by the terms of reference of the LEG.

7. The list of issues which the LEG concluded, in its first term, to be in need of further work, served as a point of departure for formulating the work programme of the LEG in its second term. These issues were summarized in the previous progress report of the LEG (FCCC/SBI/2003/16, chapter VIII). The elements currently included in the work programme of the LEG in its second term (2004–2005) are outlined below.

A. Capacity-building needs

8. The terms of reference of the LEG mandated the group to advise on capacity-building needs for LDCs in support of the preparation and implementation of NAPAs, and to provide recommendations thereon (paragraphs 1 and 9 (c) of the LEG terms of reference).

9. During its previous term, the LEG undertook activities to support capacity-building for the preparation of NAPAs through a global workshop and subsequent regional training workshops (organized in response to decision 8/CP.8), as well as through the development and dissemination of the LEG annotations to the NAPA guidelines.

10. Based on direct feedback received from workshop participants, the LEG was able to identify a number of capacity-building needs; these were included in paragraph 29 of the progress report of the LEG mentioned in paragraph 7 above.

11. At its fifth meeting, the group discussed in depth how to respond to the needs expressed by LDC Parties during the 2003 regional workshops, in particular needs relating to the two NAPA steps of ranking and prioritization, and synthesis of available information on the adverse effects of climate change. The LEG recognized that targeted support at the national level should be promoted as much as possible, because this would impart knowledge in a more direct fashion and to a larger number of participants than holding international events. It was acknowledged that the most effective way to support this need would be for the LEG to enhance national capacity to conduct such workshops, rather than actually participate in or organize the national workshops.

12. The group therefore decided to develop a training manual for conducting national workshops on ranking and prioritization, and another for conducting national workshops on synthesis of available information on the adverse effects of climate change. These should take account of previous LEG products in this context, and should be completed in time for consideration at the sixth meeting of the LEG, to be held in the second half of 2004.

13. In addition, the LEG recognized that countries would benefit from having access to a list of experts on ranking and prioritization in each region. The LEG will identify such experts and subsequently disseminate this information to the LDCs.

14. To support the NAPA step of synthesis of available information on adverse effects, the LEG will expand the training material developed for the regional workshops, and will disseminate the resulting documentation to the LDCs, as a complement to the above-mentioned training manual for national workshops.

15. The LEG also discussed the mandate of providing recommendations to the intergovernmental process on capacity-building needs in the context of paragraph 9 (c) of the LEG terms of reference – a task that remains to be completed. The group decided to develop concrete suggestions on capacity-building needs for the preparation phase of NAPAs, taking into account the feedback already received from the LDCs as well as any further input that they may provide to the LEG throughout the course of 2004, and to include these suggestions in its report to the COP at its tenth session.

16. The development of recommendations on capacity-building needs in the context of the implementation of NAPAs will be taken up at a later stage.

B. Promoting synergy among multilateral environmental agreements

17. The LEG discussed synergy among multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the context of the mandate provided by paragraph 9 (d) of the LEG terms of reference. It was noted that appendix A of the LEG's annotated guidelines already fulfil part of this mandate, but that work more aligned to the specific steps of the NAPA process was still needed in this context. As a starting point, the secretariat was requested to prepare a synthesis of information relating to synergy among MEAs using NAPA proposals that were already finalized. This should also consider the relevant information in the annotated guidelines as well as the outcome of the UNFCCC workshop on synergy held in Espoo, Finland, in July 2003. This synthesis will feed into LEG discussions on further steps to promote synergy among MEAs at the sixth meeting of the LEG.

C. Promoting regional synergy

18. The group discussed regional synergy in the context of paragraph 9 (d) of the LEG terms of reference and paragraph 26 of the previous LEG report (FCCC/SBI/2003/16). Consistent with the above-mentioned action on synergy among MEAs, the LEG requested the secretariat to prepare a synthesis of information relevant to regional synergy included in finalized NAPA proposals, for consideration and further action by the LEG. This work will be completed by August 2004.

19. In addition, the group considered the report of the Delhi workshop on local coping strategies and technologies for adaptation (FCCC/SB/2003/INF.2), and realized the importance of disseminating information on experience in using such strategies among LDCs, to support the identification of existing adaptation options among LDCs which share similar climatic conditions. The LEG agreed on the eventual need to catalogue relevant local coping strategies for easy access by LDC Parties, through a database to be developed for this purpose. Such a database should be made available in multiple formats (online, CD-ROM, and hard copy). This task is to be initiated after the sixth meeting of the LEG.

20. The LEG also agreed that sharing existing NAPA proposals among countries would help enhance awareness of opportunities for regional synergy. The Chair of the LEG was requested to take action to help progress in this regard.

D. Strategy for implementation of national adaptation programmes of action

21. The terms of reference of the LEG include several provisions relating to supporting the implementation strategy of NAPAs (paragraph 9 (a) to (d)). In addition to the provision of advice on capacity-building needs and to the promotion of synergy, which are mentioned explicitly in the terms of reference, the LEG discussed how to identify what action in other areas would be needed to fulfil the LEG mandate to provide technical guidance and advice in support of NAPA implementation.

22. Ideas put forward generally covered strategies for:

- (a) Securing financial resources
- (b) Institutional arrangements
- (c) Further prioritization (e.g. based on availability of funding, or on "urgency")
- (d) Monitoring and measuring impact of proposed activities
- (e) Mainstreaming.

23. The group agreed that a scoping paper was needed to lay out all the elements of relevance to the NAPA implementation strategy. This should make use of the questions included in annex I to the previous LEG report (FCCC/SBI/2003/16), a previously commissioned paper on NAPA implementation, and decision 6/CP.9 on further guidance for the operation of the LDC Fund. The paper is to be completed in time for consideration by the LEG at its sixth meeting.

E. Least Developed Countries Expert Group annotated guidelines

24. The LEG concluded that the main issues of concern in the interpretation of the guidelines were already being addressed through the work on ranking and prioritization and on synthesis of available information (paragraphs 11–14 above). However, in order to take account of any potential feedback received from LDC Parties, the group decided to periodically review the effectiveness of the annotations, but to revise them only if new information should warrant such revision. To help support this process, the Chair of the LEG will request feedback from LDC Parties on problems encountered with the use of the guidelines.

25. The group also discussed the possibility of creating a database of costs and benefits of project ideas identified in NAPAs, to complement the guidance included in the LEG annotated guidelines on identifying and prioritizing adaptation projects. The group agreed that this could be undertaken once a sufficient number of project ideas had been identified in NAPAs. This task is tentatively scheduled to be undertaken between the sixth and seventh meetings of the LEG.

F. Outreach and awareness-raising activities

26. In the context of the need for direct interaction with NAPA teams, and of the provisions of paragraph 1 of the LEG terms of reference which mandates the LEG to “coordinate and collaborate with other relevant efforts relating to adaptation activities for LDCs, including within the greater development context”, the group discussed ways of improving its interaction with relevant actors in the NAPA process, including the LDCs, donor countries, and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and identified means whereby this can be effected, such as side events, online newsletters, and informal consultations.

27. It was also agreed that further efforts were needed to raise awareness of the LDC web page on the secretariat’s web site, as well as of completed, ongoing and forthcoming work by the LEG, in order to establish effective interaction with relevant actors in the LDCs, including the NAPA teams and the Global Environment Facility and its implementing agencies.

Annex**Composition of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group**

The members of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, as at 22 March 2004, were as follows:¹

Mr. Klaus BROERSMA² (Netherlands)

Mr. Paul DESANKER (Malawi)

Ms. Madeleine DIOUF² (Senegal)

Mr. Bubu JALLOW (Gambia)

Mr. Puroshottam KUNWAR (Nepal)

Mr. Laavasa MALUA (Samoa)

Mr. Fred ONDURI (Uganda)

Mr. Almeida SITOE (Mozambique)

Mr. Andrew TEEM (Kiribati)

Ms. Dechen TSERING (Bhutan)

Ms. Renata VANDEPUTTE (Belgium)

¹ Only two out of the three positions allocated for LEG members from Parties included in Annex II to the Convention had been filled at the time of the fifth LEG meeting.

² Also a member of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention.