

Session 4

Adaptation planning and practices related to water resources at different levels

*UNFCCC technical workshop on water and climate
change impacts and adaptation strategies under
Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability
and adaptation to climate change
Mexico City, Mexico 19 July 2012*

Session summary

- 1. Adaptation projects are extremely diverse.** A wide variety of examples at various scales of implementation was presented. Presenters approached adaptation from different angles, with no single definition of “adaptation,” but demonstrate synergies in scale and scope.
- 2. Most adaptation is local.** All talks emphasized the importance of water as an integrating element and indicated flexibility and context as driving factors behind the chosen approaches.
- 3. Community vs ecosystem, or ecosystem + community?** Ecosystem based as well as community based solutions were raised as different starting points, but the presenters of both approaches stressed the importance of inclusion of elements of the other approach. The separation seems artificial, and possible more a result of the adaptation target setting rather than an intentional effort to exclude one over the other.

Session summary (continued)

- 4. Inclusion and synergies are possible.** The various cases emphasized the potential and need of local, indigenous, and women's bodies of knowledge depending on the setting.
- 5. Crossing borders.** The need for transboundary/ transinstitutional knowledge sharing, information exchange, and cooperation is a central issue.

Key points

- Core emphasis
 - Extreme events - Droughts & Floods
- Gaps
 - Long term decision making processes (shifts in mean climate rather than changes in climate variability)
 - Scaling lessons learned
 - Environmental flows/water balance, groundwater
 - Clearer understanding of scales
 - Engineering, donors, water sector, water utilities, private sector (500B USD/y)
 - Communication
 - **At national/regional scales, there is a strong risk of divergence in approach, lessons, and influence between projects that originate in finance, economic, and engineering sectors and areas that are not grounded in these disciplines**

Key points (continued)

- Logical starting points
 - Infrastructure
 - Cities
 - Decision-making processes at all governance/spatial scales (institutional “operating rules”)
 - Food, energy, water
- Role of NWP – lack of consensus about potential niche, past-future utility. Should the NWP be focused on internal (UNFCCC) audiences, external groups, or both? What should the NWP “enable”?
- How should water be targeted systematically by the NWP – sectors, processes, scales? Doing everything seems unlikely to be useful or productive.