

Third Meeting of the Adaptation Committee Bonn, Germany, 18—20 June 2013

Communication, Information and Outreach Strategy

1. Introduction

In developing a message-based strategy for communication, information and outreach, the AC took note of the methodology considered by the UNFCCC Adaptation Program for the development of their communications strategy.

In that methodology the definition of a future-oriented vision and an output oriented mission is essential, to frame the activities and to enable the elaboration of different messages tailored to specific stakeholders and taking advantage of all available messaging tools.

2. Background

As part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework, Parties established the Adaptation Committee to promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention, inter alia, through the following functions:

- a. Providing technical support and guidance to the Parties, respecting the country-driven approach, with a view to facilitating the implementation of adaptation activities, including those listed in paragraphs 14 and 15 of decision 1/CP.16, where appropriate;
- b. Strengthening, consolidating and enhancing the sharing of relevant information, knowledge, experience and good practices, at the local, national, regional and international levels, taking into account, as appropriate, traditional knowledge and practices;
- c. Promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organizations, centers and networks, in order to enhance the implementation of adaptation actions, in particular in developing country Parties;
- d. Providing information and recommendations, drawing on adaptation good practices, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties when providing guidance on means to incentivize the implementation of adaptation actions, including finance, technology and capacity-building and other ways to enable climate-resilient development and reduce vulnerability, including to the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention, as appropriate;
- e. Considering information communicated by Parties on their monitoring and review of adaptation actions, support provided and received, possible needs and gaps and other relevant information, including information communicated under the Convention, with a view to recommending what further actions may be required, as appropriate;

In developing its Communication, Information and Outreach Strategy, the Adaptation Committee recognized two observations on climate and climate change as pivotal for its communication, information and outreach activities:

- a. Too many people are already adversely effected by their current climate situation.

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- b. The variability of our current climate implies that even rare weather events, such as long drought periods and severe storms, can be expected to occur on a more or less regular basis. Such events can cause damage in developing as well as developed countries, showing that every community, economy or ecosystem is to some extent vulnerable for climate related anomalies.
High vulnerability of a community, economy or ecosystem, shown by frequent and large damage, could be considered as an 'adaptation deficit' to our current climate. Growing awareness of such 'adaptation deficit' should be taken on board in the communication about adapting to climate change, as a basis for a more integrated approach for adaption to climate and climate change.
- c. While much is happening in terms of planning and implementation of adaptation measures, such actions often aren't visible enough. Overall, progress is too slow. In the past years there has been a growing understanding that, in spite of all mitigation efforts, climate change is unavoidable. As a consequence, in some development projects adaptation is already part of the design -however- in most cases rather invisible. Making such showcases more explicit can help mainstreaming adaptation measures as a fundamental part of all projects relevant to climate resilient development. Additionally we need to improve awareness on the effects of climate change in order to show that climate related risks are upon us and that we urgently need to start planning for adaptation measures to be implemented in the (near) future.

3. Vision and mission

Vision

In the view of the Parties (1/CP.16/para.2 (b)) adaptation must be addressed with the same priority as mitigation and requires appropriate institutional arrangements to enhance adaptation action and support.

Consequently, in the view of the AC communication, information and outreach will be dedicated to bring about a worldwide increase of awareness on the need to urgently adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change, both within and outside the climate community. These effects might not only come from extreme events -such as floods, severe storms, excessive drought, etc.- but also from slow onset changes such as increasing salinization caused by sea level rise or growing irrigation needs.

Mission statement

By its work on communication, information and outreach the Adaptation Committee aims to help achieve that, although in terms of climate change this is a fairly short period, in 10 years' time:

- a. Adaptation is an integral part of resilient development of communities, economies and ecosystems;
- b. Adaptation is part of sustainable business development;
- c. Investments, both public and private, are all climate proof: mitigation as well as adaptation are decision criteria in the financial sector;
- d. Adaptation is an integral part of education of the new generation;

- e. Adaptation is top of mind subject in public and a trending topic in (social) media;
- f. Adaptation is of equal importance at COP as mitigation of GHG emissions;

In achieving this task, the efforts of the Adaptation Committee are directed to both the climate community -i.e. the UNFCCC and related UN-organizations, NGO's and relevant institutions- and the general public and private companies.

4. Strategy

The AC realizes that measures to adapt to the effects of climate change might also benefit efforts to fight the adverse effects of other factors that hamper sustainable and resilient development of communities, economies and ecosystems. Therefore, on matters of communication and information on adaptation to climate change, the AC will look upon possibilities and opportunities for an integrated approach on each level -convention, program, project- to favor the effectiveness and sustainability of otherwise solitaire and isolated efforts.

Adaptation is an essential complement to mitigation and a catalyst of overall action on climate and climate change. Moreover, the ability to cope with the adverse effects of climate change is strongly linked to the ability to cope with the current climate. Awareness-raising should be focused on both these aspects.

Decreasing the vulnerability of communities, economies and ecosystems to the adverse effects of climate and climate change is essential to establish the conditions for sustainable development. At the same time, creating and increasing resilience of communities, economies and ecosystems is an essential condition to make this development future proof.

In this vision, governance related aspects are an integrated part of adaptive measures, next to technology. Measures might then include strengthening and incorporating local expertise - including harvesting of past capacity building- development and implementation of early warning systems and emergency (evacuation) plans, training and support on risk mapping and decision making.

Branding and reframing adaptation in a different way is essential to raise awareness for adaptation, taking better into account the relevant expertise of all Parties and at all levels, and also taking into account the whole of influences limiting sustainable development.

Success will be measured on both ends of the chain: on the delivering side - i.e. what information and how many messages have been sent out, or how many topics were covered by a publication- as well as on the receiving side - i.e. measuring what information has been absorbed and used in planning for adaptation, whether our communication has put adaptation higher on the political agenda etc.

For the purposes of the AC, adaptation could also be characterized as 'climate resilient development, following measures closing the adaptation deficit, providing a cost effective response to climate change with multiple benefits across sectors'. In this way adaptation is framed towards a more positive and challenging connotation, although the exact position of a division line between efforts to 'close the adaptation deficit' and 'adapt to climate change' might be difficult to identify and be different for distinct events and societies.

An important task for the AC will be to show no-regret options around the division line between efforts to 'close the adaptation deficit' and 'adapt to climate change' issue, in order to stimulate

and further the discussion on the need, nature and finance of adaptation measures. Since an adaptation deficit might be enlarged by the effects of a combination of factors (desertification, deforestation, urbanization, etc.) the AC will also highlight opportunities for integrated action of the whole of these adverse effects.

The audience

Different target groups may need different information to be effective in their decisions and way of acting on the challenge of adaptation to climate change. It is necessary to understand the nature of the different audiences to be successful in effective, tailored communication. For that reason a distinction is made in 'internal' and 'external' communication.

Internal communication

Internal communication is primarily directed towards the Convention and its bodies, since an important task for the AC is to provide the Convention and its bodies with the latest information on adaptation. This information can be used in and to the background of the negotiations, not only on adaptation but also on related aspects on mitigation.

Additionally the internal communication is directed to closely related groups and organizations within the climate community, such UN specialized organizations (FAO, WMO, WHO, etc.) an convention secretariats (ICAO, IMO, Desertification, Biodiversity, etc.), NGO's, business organizations, etc.

External communication

External communication is directed to target groups with no direct connection to or specific interest in the work of the UNFCCC and its bodies. More specific this could be communities, companies and NGO's, but also parts of government not directly connected to the negotiations. These target groups represent a great variety of interests and objectives, so a further distinction is made in:

- a. *Communication on adaptation as such.* This type of communication is general by nature and is aiming at 'image building' and 'awareness raising'. The main target groups will probably be the general public and people entering the climate discussion
- b. *Dedicated communication to specific groups.* This type of communication is dedicated to tailored information and aims to influence the process and outcome of decision making within these groups.

The means

In its communication, information and outreach efforts the AC strives to use already existing channels, to be most efficient both in distributing its message as in listening to exterior voices. This means that a focus of the efforts will be towards connecting with and through regular channels of relevant UN-bodies, in particular UNFCCC, and make use of their 'communication windows'.

In addition the AC might anticipate and respond to communication and information needs by means of contributing to interviews, press releases, conferences, side events, webpage, social media, broadcast, etc. Also, for the purpose of addressing specific targets groups the AC might also contribute to dedicated events, presentations and other means to effectively raise awareness on adaptation issues.

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE COMMUNITY

On adaptation, characteristic for the climate community is its diversity in opinions on the nature of the relation between events occurring and climate change. The work of the AC will therefore be directed primarily to raise awareness for the possible effects of both extreme and slow onset climate related events on communities, economies and ecosystems, without acknowledging them to either climate or climate change. This will include, if appropriate, value free information and communication on scientific facts and opinions on any relation between climate and weather events and climate change.

The AC is aware that effective and sustainable adaptation might include both technology and governance oriented measures. In its efforts to raise awareness for adaptation, the AC might include both technological and governance oriented showcases in its communications, for instance on Parties' efforts in the field of the development and implementation of emergency plans and early-warning systems.

Communication

The essence of communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium. The efforts of the AC are therefore directed to establishing, stimulating and facilitating the dialogue on adaptation. For that purpose the AC established **the Adaptation Forum** with the aim to raise the profile of adaptation and solidify linkages and partnerships between adaptation experts and the work of the UNFCCC.

Furthermore the AC will **support forums and workshops** on adaptation within the framework of the Convention and **highlight opportunities for discussion on adaptation** between Parties and with representatives of organizations within the climate community.

Information

Information is about providing facts, meaning that -in the context of the Convention- the work of the AC will not only be on raising attention for scientific facts on adaptation, as provided by the IPCC and acknowledged scientific institutions, but also on showing the diverse viewpoints from Parties. Furthermore the AC intends to contribute to a more encouraging and positive attitude towards adaptation by identifying and showing successful projects and programs.

For that purpose the AC will **stimulate the preparation and dissemination of factsheets and presentations on specific issues and other concise informative notes**, with the aim that relevant reports and insights become easier available to the audience. Also the AC strives to **realize increasing attention for adaptation in relevant meetings, documents and releases of the UNFCCC**.

Outreach

The work of the AC is dedicated to grow awareness of adaptation needs and opportunities in developing as well as developed country Parties. Although direct influence might be difficult to measure in concrete terms, the AC seeks to communicate on **the results of adaptation related activities**. On the technology side this may be on the use of local expertise and knowledge in adaptation projects -as a measure for effective capacity building- and on the governance side the extent to which countries take responsibility for their adaptation by identifying climate related problems, developing adaptation plans and establishing priorities for urgent action.

ADDRESSING THE WORLD OUTSIDE

It can be expected that the general public might have a strong opinion about climate change, based on both objective and biased publications in the press and other media. For this part of the

audience the AC will focus on adaptation only, whether or not it comes forth from climate or climate change. In this way discussion about the need for adaptation to the effects of climate change might be avoided or framed as a wise no-regret option.

Communication

The essence of communication is the exchange of information in discussions in forums, workshop, press and other communication media. The AC believes that a **calendar showing relevant events to communicate** with the general public on adaptation, as made by IISD, is helpful to effectively coordinate the message and performance on this issue. The AC will simulate that **results of discussions at these events are made available to the Parties for further consideration.**

Furthermore, the AC strives to stimulate the attention for **business opportunities** for the private sector, including financial institutions, amongst others through showing and highlighting of ongoing and new initiatives from Parties.

Information

Towards the outside world the AC will focus on showing facts on trends in climate events and the effects, thereof. This might for instance include slow onset effects of longer drought periods and increased salt intrusion as well as the effects of instant calamities as hurricane Sandy on the US east coast. Awareness of these risks make clear that adaptation is required, to make communities, economies and ecosystems climate proof to both climate and climate change. Next to that the AC will show successful adaptation projects and programs in both developing as developed countries.

For that purpose the AC will **stimulate the preparation and dissemination of factsheets on these issues** with the aim that relevant reports and insights become easier available to the audience.

Outreach

Influence of activities of the AC to the opinion and actions outside the climate community might be in the tone and content of publications about adaptation to climate change in the mass media and trending discussions in social media. When available, the AC will actively **support broad dissemination of evaluations** on this issue.

5. Output 2013–2014

For the realization and implementation of its strategy on Communication, Information and Outreach, the AC highly depends on capacity made available by or through the communications department of the UNFCCC.

Continuous activities

In the initial stage the efforts might be directed to exploring the relevant actors in the network, i.e.:

- a. identify and connect to communication officers/projects within the climate community
- b. identify target groups and define their specific objectives, in order to better identify the tailored key message
- c. look for opinion leaders ('champions') in target groups, to address the issue

The AC, in close cooperation with the UNFCCC communications department, will look for alliances to expand the network and identify and use opportunities in- and outside the climate community to raise awareness for adaptation and promote adaptation as an opportunity for development

Specific activities

In the implementation of the strategy, the AC will give special attention to the following activities:

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| 2013 | Organize the first session of the Adaptation Forum at COP 19 |
| 2013-2014 | Stimulate that national experts and UN-organizations prepare factsheets on the effects of climate change in relation to water, health and food security and make them available in- and outside the climate community |
| 2013-2014 | Support outreach activities to the private sector by Parties a.o. through identifying relevant presentations on business opportunities for adaptation |
| 2014 | Stimulate that the performance of adaptation and adaptation activities is evaluated as part of national communications and report to CoP 20. |

For the longer term it might be expected that the core of the communication, information and outreach activities of the AC might shift from awareness building and promotion of planning to showing successful responses through public, private and public-private partnerships.
