

Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

Informal meeting of Parties and Partners to the Nairobi work programme

Bonn, Germany

Tuesday, 7 June 2011, 15:00-19:30

Summary note

(Prepared by: Rachel Berger, Practical Action and Blane Harvey, Institute of Development Studies)

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. The idea of having a partner-hosted meeting of the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) arose from discussions around the 2010 Focal Point forum at COP 16, Cancun Mexico. Discussions between Practical Action and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the NWP co-chair's request for suggested changes to the meeting format led to these two partners' offer to organise a meeting of parties and partners. The offer was based on their observations (shared by other parties and partners) that the existing meeting format:

(a) Was excessively focused on pledge updates to plenary from individual partners which became quite repetitive;

(b) Had a room layout (classroom-style) and presentation format which discouraged dialogue between those in attendance;

(c) Was very supply driven and did not capitalise sufficiently on the participation of non-Annex 1 parties to gain a better sense of needs whether they were being met through partner activities.

2. At the invitation of the UNFCCC Secretariat, Practical Action and IDS agreed to organise the meeting of parties and partners to the NWP at the Bonn Climate Change Talks. The meeting was designed and facilitated with the aim of meeting three overarching objectives:

(a) Provide participants with an update on work accomplished under the NWP;

(b) Create an interactive space for exchange between parties and partners of the NWP on issues of shared concern;

(c) Co-produce a set of ‘take home points’ on the basis of the experiences of parties and partners of the NWP.

3. The format for the main portion of the meeting was based on ‘Open Space’ methodology. Ahead of the meeting the UNFCCC Secretariat circulated an invitation to NWP Focal points requesting that they also submit topics or challenges related to the NWP’s priority activities which they felt should be a focus of discussion. On the basis of the responses received a set of discussion themes was established whilst leaving participants the option to suggest additional topics at the outset of meeting, or even while the meeting was in process. The themes which were covered at the meeting were:

- (a) Application of climate projections and models for local adaptation;
- (b) Measuring adaptation outcomes;
- (c) Ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation;
- (d) Integrating approaches to national-scale adaptation;
- (e) Challenges to getting best practices shared with and taken up by SIDS and LDCs;
- (f) Stimulating better coordination between knowledge service providers.

4. This short report provides a summary of the discussions which took place under each of these themes, the evaluation of the process by participants, and the concluding comments which came from the closing segment of the meeting. We would like to thank the UNFCCC Secretariat for their support for and participation in this event, and the meeting participants who invested their time and energy in making it a success. The Agenda for the meeting is provided in the Annex.

II. Summary of round table discussions

A. Integrating adaptation into national planning

5. Two main issues were discussed: how to manage national decision making in a way that addresses community needs including participatory planning and monitoring, and the challenge of planning for the transformational change that may be needed. Climate change issues tend, in most countries, to be ‘stuck’ in the Ministry of Environment, although the cross-sectoral nature of impacts is widely recognised. For communities on the other hand, impacts of climate change such as water shortages, reduced harvests and linked but indirectly related issues such as deforestation are seen as a linked series of challenges. Experiences were shared from Peru, where the government deliberately empowered regional level government in order to effectively manage local responses to climate change impacts, as the local communities had great concerns; however at the national level, there is still the problem that climate change issues remain solely the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment. Ethiopia on the other hand has adopted an integrated approach, with the development of a national transformation and growth plan, into which all its national plans including NAPA and those of other sectors are integrated. The need to involve civil society organisations and build upward and downward accountability was recognised, but in the time available, no clear recommendations were put forward to achieve this.

6. Discussants agreed that transformational change is only possible through country driven, integrated, approaches. However, these need to bring 2050, long-term scenarios into play and this is not the way that any stakeholders, whether government or community, have begun to respond. Bringing in experience from different countries, it was shared that in

Ghana, short-term interests trump long-term risks in research conducted. In Nepal, there has been a pilot LAPA process, following on from the NAPA; this process was not a government led approach, but one financed by DFID and led by a IIED, with a consortium of NGOs and follow up on the pilot study has currently stalled because of this. Yemen has experienced floods, but in formulating their disaster response did not think about the long-term risk factors. As a result, infrastructure problems were addressed without giving consideration to livelihoods or social analysis. Because of this, when Yemen experienced another flood, the new infrastructure was destroyed. The World Bank is now considering including a climate risk assessment in all the Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNA) that also gives consideration to livelihoods and social analysis

B. Measuring adaptation outcomes

7. This discussion sought to answer the question, is adaptation measurable, and if so, how? Adaptation activities may not yield results for many years – yet donors increasingly look for clear results by the end of the funding period. Outputs and outcomes need to be measured at different geographical scales (local or national) and on different timescales. In measuring any outcome, baselines are crucial, but the data needed to measure adaptation is not always readily available. The challenge was summarised in the phrase: What we need for adaptation is not Business as Usual, but Unusual Business¹.

C. Climate models for local adaptation

8. This discussion focused not just on the availability, but also on the relevance, of downscaled climate models for adaptation. Models are only one input into decision making – the lack of detailed downscaled models is not necessarily a major barrier to decisions on adaptation at the local level. Even where models exist at a regional level, the uncertainties are very large, and so decisionmaking takes place amid this uncertainty. However, even without models, local communities need scientific information presented to them in an accessible form if they are to be able to adapt. The issue of uncertainty, e.g. of different estimates of sea level rise by 2100, can seem to present a barrier to decision making on costly infrastructure. However, a warning was given: even where technical and scientific information is available to assist with rational decision making, local decisions such as the siting of a school can be made for political reasons that lead to maladaptive outcomes, such as where a school built in the path of a previous landslide.

D. Ecosystem based adaptation

9. This discussion was largely between organisations with a high understanding of the concept of ecosystem based adaptation (EbA), and on how to broaden understanding amongst Parties and NGOs who might be implementing adaptation programmes. There was therefore no basic discussion of the notion of EbA. The starting point was that at a local level, adaptation and mitigation are inextricably linked in activities linked to climate change adaptation, and in people's understanding about climate change. Ecosystems have a role in both, since healthy ecosystems are essential for adaptation, and can perform a role in mitigation, as carbon sinks. The proponents of EbA recognise the need to share knowledge on valuing the effectiveness of ecosystem based adaptation and on how to operate schemes for payment for ecosystem services (PES).

¹ It is worth noting that M and E of adaptation is actively under discussion and research among UK INGOs, UK's DFID, WRI and other institutions.

10. NWP partners have a great deal of experience that should be shared to enhance understanding of the stages of EbA and in what form experience can be communicated to best support and inform national and local level adaptation planning and implementation. NWP could take forward building greater understanding through presentation of concrete practical examples at different scales - across sectors, processes and countries.

E. Challenges for LDCs and SIDS in accessing and sharing best practices on adaptation

11. The discussion started from the fact that these countries can often send only tiny delegations of 3 people to UNFCCC negotiations. This means that they cannot encompass all the issues, and this was the reason that they were not, as hoped, represented in this group discussion, since they had to attend the negotiations.

12. In some countries, SIDS especially, there are often no tertiary educational institutions, so there is a lack of institutional scientific knowledge held within the country. The enormous variety of geographical and cultural contexts means that the sharing of best practice and experiences must be tailored to the particular contexts and culture, identifying the more general enabling conditions of best practise separately from culturally and geographically specific solutions. The way forward was suggested as south-south exchange, through regional centres of excellence, in order to encourage bottom-up capacity building.

F. How to encourage more effective collaboration between knowledge players

13. This discussion centred on two questions:

(a) How do you nurture communities of practice?

(b) How do you turn the good ideas you have at workshops into concrete actions?

14. A number of points were agreed. Face-to-face events for knowledge sharing are vital, but they need to be very well facilitated. There need to be incentives both for individual staff and at the institutional level to pursue collaboration, rather than continuing with business as usual after such an event: individuals need to feel motivated, and there must be strong leadership, for behaviour to change. Incentives are more important than resources, although small amounts of funds to support follow-up actions are useful if they are flexible with regard to how they are used, and available over several years.

III. Closing session and review of the event

15. The informal workshop approach had been enjoyable and effective at getting good discussion going on concrete issues. However, for the increased success of the NWP it is vital to reach the people who are working in government delivering adaptation and these are not the negotiators or focal points who attend UNFCCC sessions where the focal point meetings take place. Regional chapters for the NWP could be more effective at bringing people together, perhaps with themed meetings.

16. Reaching the right people involves finding out the best way of communicating with each relevant group. The NWP could provide a forum for exchanging ideas on the most effective media, and on how to build bridges between scientists and decisionmakers.

IV. Evaluation

17. Of the 35-40 different people that came to the event for at least part of the time, 21 completed simple evaluation form. There was support for repeating this style of event as being more fruitful than the previous format, and some clear suggestions for how to improve the event further. There was a strong wish to find a way of attracting more government representatives.

Annex

**Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation
to climate change
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AGENDA

Tuesday, 7 June:

Part 1: Room METRO, Ministry of Transport: 15.00-17.50 hours

Part 2: Salon KOCH, Hotel Maritim: 18.00-19.30 hours

Time	Activity	Who?
	PART ONE	
15.00-15.45	3 introductory presentations	1) Secretariat (overview of the meeting and update); 2) a UN org; 3) NGO or research body.
15.45 – 16.15	- Finalisation of Open Space discussion themes and table hosts - Outline of the open space process	All
16.15 – 16.30	Short tea break	
16.30 – 17.50	‘Open space’/Round Tables/Cross Pollination of demand and supply of support or information *	Tables “hosted” by 1-2 participants, each focusing on a particular theme. Other participants then move between tables to hear short talks, contribute lessons, and identify key messages.
	PART TWO	
18.00 – 18.45	Refreshment/snack break, Ideas Marketplace and opportunity for 1:1 discussions	Informal and ad hoc arrangements between delegates and partners
18.45 – 19.30	Plenary session with table rapporteurs reporting back on discussions and key messages from their groups (these will be collected and compiled). Opportunity for comments and overall conclusions from Secretariat on messages coming from the meeting	
19.30	Event conclusion – participants submit short evaluation form and adjourn to dinner and drinks (individuals to fund themselves). Venue TBC.	

*Suggested format: partners who offer will each speak for 5 minutes on an aspect that they have in depth experience of (e.g. a particular tool or methodology for vulnerability assessment, or their conceptual framework of adaptive capacity, etc). There then follows time for questions and discussions. In round 2, delegates move to another table, to get a taster on another issue.
