



Submission by Lesotho

Guidelines for the formulation of national adaptation plans (SBI)

10 May 2013

Introduction

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho welcomes this opportunity to submit views on the application of the guidelines for the formulation of national adaptation plans, in accordance with decision 5/CP.17, paragraph 7. The submission aims to provide Lesotho government's efforts in addressing adaptation through various means that would subsequently contribute towards a coordinated and comprehensive medium and long term approach. Lesotho Government therefore finds the guidelines for the formulation of the national adaptation plans timely as they would effectively guide the national approach towards addressing adaptation from now and into the future.

Key challenges and adaptation priorities for Lesotho

The geographical position, geophysical features and poor economic situation put Lesotho in a critical state of vulnerability to climate change. About two thirds of the country is mountainous which supports fragile ecosystems. Key environmental challenges in Lesotho are drought, land degradation, land desertification and loss of biodiversity, and climate change has and is continuing to exacerbate these challenges. These challenges are major threats to national development efforts aimed at securing food security and reducing poverty.

The country developed a national adaptation plan of action (NAPA) which was published in 2007. NAPA formulation involved various expertise mainly from the Government Departments, local communities and the civil society. It also built national capacity and awareness on climate

change through providing a platform for information sharing between different stakeholders. The NAPA identified the agricultural sector and policy reforms as key priorities for calming the adverse effects of climate change to its society and economy. A total of eleven adaptation options were identified under NAPA.

Progress and experiences in addressing adaptation through the NAPA

Lesotho is currently implementing one NAPA project aimed at improving the national early warning system against climate induced hazards and disasters. The project is funded through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). Even though this project appears as priority number four in the list, it is a prerequisite through which options higher on the list would succeed. The project will assist the country to better prepare for challenges brought by climate through establishing an early warning system. Both the station network will be improved together with the computation capabilities and the communication channels. Public awareness campaigns are been held throughout the country. Further NAPA projects are at various stages of development and Lesotho looks forward to their implementation to benefit the local communities..

Lesotho is also using bilateral channels to address adaptation. The country has just completed the implementation of the Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP) funded by the Government of Japan through the United Nations Development Programme. The AAP demonstrated other adaptation options the country can pursue. Among others, irrigation schemes powered by renewable energy were piloted at various sites in the country. The AAP further complemented the national station network by installing instruments whose data will be used to establish renewable energy potential of the country. The ultimate aim of the country is maximize usage of renewable energy so that burning of biomass can be reduced which in turn will decrease the land degradation challenges.

Development of a climate change policy - a platform for coordinated approach in addressing climate change

In recent years, Lesotho has witnessed extremes weather events that include severe and frequent droughts, floods, intense thunderstorms and winds. These weather phenomena hamper national development. However, the country often faces difficulties when it has to systemically deal with these challenges because it lacks a policy direction. Policy development was among the top priorities identified under NAPA.

Lesotho has therefore taken a leap towards coordinated and comprehensive approach in addressing adaptation, which subsequently lays the groundwork for the NAP process. The country is developing a national climate change policy and a subsequent strategy through the kind assistance of the Government of Wales. The policy is aimed to guide both the national adaptation and mitigation actions. It will further elevate climate change into the national development plans. The policy will provide a platform for the country to effectively manage its national adaptation plan process..

Conclusion

Through laying down firm policy frameworks and various forms of assistance from international partners, Lesotho will be able to formulate and put to practice the national adaptation plans to climate change to mitigate the negative impacts brought by climate change. Lesotho will therefore greatly benefit from the funding for the formulation of NAPs through the LDCF, as this will enable scaling up and complementing these existing efforts, as a way to subsequently frame and lead an effective NAP process.