

**Chairman's Summary of the In-Session Workshop on Adaptation of Climate Change
8 December 2004**

Buenos Aires

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- The in-session workshop was held on Wednesday, 8 December from 3 to 7 p.m. The purpose of the workshop was to explore further the themes of: applications of methods and tools to assess and prepare for adaptation; and linkages between adaptation and sustainable development.
- It was open to all participants and was very well attended. Presenters at the workshop were drawn from Parties, and other experts and practitioners in the field. The discussion period allowed for an active and productive exchange of views and lessons learned between delegates.
- The appreciation was expressed to the Government of Canada for providing financial support that was vital for organising this workshop.
- The workshop covered a number of relevant topics, which were selected based on guidance received from Parties in their submissions, as well as a background paper (FCCC/SBSTA/2004/INF.13) that was prepared by the secretariat to facilitate the discussion at the workshop. This background paper provided a summary of application of methods and tools for assessing impacts and vulnerability and developing adaptation responses. Particular attention was given to regional climate models and the practices and models used by relevant expert communities. It also included some discussion on issues that the SBSTA may wish to consider in this connection.
- The secretariat has also posted 22 published papers on its web site relating to the linkages between adaptation and sustainable development. These papers represent an overview of recent literature exploring these linkages.
- This workshop had two parts. In the first part we listened to presentations by invited experts on the topics identified at the last session. The second part was devoted to an exchange of views and lessons learned among the delegates and observers.
- The first two presentations provided insightful overview on approaches, methods and tools for climate change impact, vulnerability and adaptation assessment, their use and usefulness for different purposes and on the application of regional climate models.
- Then, we turned to experiences in application of methods and tools in different regions for both assessment of vulnerability, and preparing for adaptation. We heard about the use of a regional model in India for preparation of their national communication. Another presentation was devoted to using scenario-based and other tools that are used for developing adaptation responses in the agriculture-based economy in New Zealand.
- There was a special interest in experiences of relevant communities, in particular the disaster risk management community. A representative of the Red Cross, Nicaragua discussed practical experiences, approaches, methods and tools used and how climate change risks are being taken into consideration of their work.

- The next set of presentations addressed different linkages between adaptation and sustainable development. The first was a presentation by the Chair of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Programme Counsel on the results of the Counsel's recent comprehensive studies in the region.
- We then moved to a different part of the world, and heard about the experiences of the Federal States on Micronesia on a risk-based approach and on the integration of climate change concerns into sustainable development planning.
- In the final presentation an IPCC expert explored the fate of indigenous people under climate change.
- After listening to those excellent presentations we then moved to an exchange of views and of lessons learned. These regarding the issues and in particular on their solutions, as well as possible actions that the SBSTA might undertake. The general discussion was initiated with three-minute interventions from Parties and observers who expressed an interest to do so prior to the workshop. They came from Tuvalu, Brazil, the EU, Canada and the ISDR.
- The general discussion that followed provided for a very useful exchange of views that I believe had stimulated our collective thinking and helped us identify promising avenues for SBSTA's ongoing work under this agenda item.
- A number of issues were addressed during the workshop, as follows:
 - The discussion went beyond the scope and topics of the workshop. Many Parties called for action on adaptation. There was common sense of urgency regarding the need to shift focus of activities from "facilitating adaptation" to the implementation of adaptation measures. Participants noted that, while there is uncertainty in relation to the magnitude and timing of climate change, this uncertainty should not be a barrier to starting implementation of adaptation measures.
 - On the issues relating to methodologies and linkages between adaptation and sustainable development several issues were raised:
 - There are two basic approaches to and associated methods for the assessment of the impacts, vulnerability and adaptation: climate impact research and climate adaptation research. Climate impact research needs to be complemented by adaptation and vulnerability assessment to enable decision-makers to set priorities, plan strategies and implement adaptation options.
 - A combination of the two approaches can successfully guide actions for adaptation and for strengthening adaptive capacity to current climate risks, while addressing longer-term vulnerability.
 - Relevant local knowledge, as well as knowledge and methods available in other relevant communities, in particular the disaster management community, is critical for developing successful and practical adaptation responses. There is the need to seek ways under the UNFCCC to encourage the development and use of methods and tools generated through this knowledge.

- The approach to adaptation depends on national priorities and time frames, as well as available resources. For adequate assessment of adaptation there is a need to enable all Parties to access information on methods, their applicability for different tasks and associated uncertainties and limitations. The UNFCCC Compendium on methods and tools to assess impacts and adaptation was mentioned in this regard.
- Modelling studies are important for evaluating long-term climate change impacts, for the support of international processes and for improving stakeholder awareness.
- Capacity to use regional models in developing countries needs to be enhanced. Participants also noted the importance of reliable data on climate and socio-economic activities to make adaptation decisions.
- The exchange of information, cooperation and transfer of technology and know how is vital for successful design and implementation of adaptation projects and programmes.
- It is clear that climate impacts pose a threat to sustainable development and that action to reduce vulnerability is needed to promote sustainable development.
- In conclusion, I would like to thank all speakers for their excellent presentations and the secretariat for its support.