

In Session Workshop on Adaptation – Presentation by Australia (check against delivery)

- . Australia strongly believes that adaptation is an important issue for all countries, as the unavoidable impacts of climate change will be felt by us all. There is – therefore - clear benefit in all of us working together to understand, develop and implement effective adaptation responses.
- . For its part, Australia has unique vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change:
 - Australia is the inhabited continent with the driest and most variable climate; and
 - Many natural and human systems and economic activities in Australia are vulnerable to the potential impacts of climate change. Shifting rainfall patterns, for example, could severely impact our agricultural and livestock production, as well as the sustainability of our cities and towns.
- . Australia therefore places a high priority on commencing the process of identifying these impacts at regional and local levels, and on developing and implementing appropriate domestic responses.
- . The experiences we are gaining through this process - which is also underway in many other countries - will help inform the development of a practical and effective five-year program of work on adaptation.

Principles

- . We believe that the work programme should be built on four key principles.
- . First and foremost, it should assist all Parties to increase their **understanding** of potential impacts and of effective and locally-applicable adaptation responses.
- . Secondly, it must be **soundly-based**. **It must rely on** the latest available scientific information and be **flexible** enough to incorporate new information about regional and country level impacts and vulnerability, countries' adaptation priorities, and the practical experiences reported by other countries
 - In this regard, we note that unless actions are based on a sound assessment of scientific and socio-economic information and a well-planned risk management approach, they may:
 - : be of no use;
 - : significantly exceed requirements (and thus waste limited resources); or, worse still
 - : be counter-productive.

- . Thirdly, the program must take into account and appropriately **complement the activities of other organisations**, including those involved in developing and implementing national sustainable development strategies, and should build on previous UNFCCC efforts and activities.
 - The work program cannot be effective, particularly not cost-effective, if it duplicates the efforts of other more experienced international development organisations or tries to undertake tasks better handled at the national, regional or local level.
- . Fourthly, adaptation to climate change should be **mainstreamed**, wherever possible, into normal planning and development processes and investment cycles, rather than attempting to deal with it as a stand-alone issue.
- . Let me give an example of our approach. We know our Great Barrier Reef is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. But it is also under pressure from tourism, the fishing industry, invasive species like the crown of thorns star fish and from nutrient run off from upstream farming.
- . Rather than trying to separately pin-point the impact of climate change on the reef and respond accordingly, we are improving the overall health of the reef, by reducing the external pressures upon it - in order to build its resilience - so it stands a better chance of resisting any and all of these pressures.
- . In other words, what we are doing to protect our Great Barrier Reef from the impacts of climate change is no different to what we would do to protect it from the multitude of other threats that this area faces.
- . Internationally, we face similar challenges and can adopt similar approaches.
- . If done appropriately, actions that assist sustainable development will also assist in equipping countries to adapt to climate change - and will therefore benefit Parties regardless of whether specific climate impacts eventuate.

Scope and content of the work program

- . Australia has a number of suggestions regarding the possible scope and structure of the work program. We look forward to working with others to develop a constructive framework to assist all Parties to take effective and soundly based action to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Useful elements would include:

An initial stocktake

- . This would include a stocktake of existing decisions and activities already being undertaken under the Convention and a stocktake of other relevant international activities and mechanisms that are relevant to an effective adaptation response.
- . This would include, for example, the degree to which adaptation is built

into overseas aid and other sustainable development activities.

- . This would also help us in identifying the current state of, and gaps in, knowledge in relation to climate change impacts and effective adaptation responses.

The second element involves analysis and development of mechanisms/tools

- . This would include continuing to update, and expand - where necessary - the Compendium of Methods and Tools to Evaluate Impacts of, Vulnerability and Adaptation to climate change and
- . Developing mechanisms to improve coordination between local, regional and international players that are addressing adaptation issues.
- . In developing these mechanisms or tools, Parties should identify those adaptation measures for which the UNFCCC should take prime responsibility and those that can be dealt with more effectively through mainstream development processes.

The third element is focused on information exchange

- . The UNFCCC could hold targeted workshops to provide a forum for Parties to share information about adaptation tools, as well as about methodologies and lessons learnt from implementing adaptation projects. Among other things, workshops could look at:
 - tools and approaches for risk assessment;
 - approaches and methodologies that assist in evaluating the benefits and costs of adaptation measures; and
 - processes for identifying no-regrets and multiple-benefit adaptation measures which can be taken immediately.

The fourth element involves learning from practical experience

- . We also need to take advantage of the fact that Parties will implement a range of adaptation measures and pilot projects over the next five years. These will be part of mainstream development and planning processes, and as result of multilateral, regional and bilateral adaptation initiatives, including the GEF's adaptation pilot.
 - these may assist to further inform the development and implementation of effective adaptation responses by all countries
 - the UNFCCC could explore ways to draw out, collate and share lessons learned and best practices to inform organisations and Parties for future implementation.
- . *Finally*, we also need to put in place appropriate arrangements to modify the work program as further information is received. For example, consideration should be given to any amendments required to the work program following publication of the IPCC's 4th Assessment Report.

- . Colleagues, adapting to climate change is a significant challenge and Australia stands ready to do its part. We look forward to working with you in developing this work program as the next step in progressing our collective efforts.
- . Thank you for your attention.