

Seminar of Governmental Experts (16-17 May 2005)
Abstract of a presentation by Finland on behalf of the European
Community and its member States

Adaptation and Sustainable Development

Climate change and its adverse physical effects will further impact on social and economic development prospects of nations and livelihoods of households and can have a strong negative impact on nature and biological diversity. Climate change is already happening. Therefore, addressing climate change should be part and parcel of sustainable development policies, including development cooperation and funding policies, now and in the future. Non-action leads to higher adaptation needs and endangers the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Adaptation needs to be tailored into local, sub-national and national decision making to meet local needs and circumstances. Integration of adaptation concerns into sectoral decision-making is key, rather than developing stand-alone adaptation actions. Synergies should also be strengthened at all levels, including action taken under various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

There is a need to increase awareness of climate change and its impacts among policy makers in all sectors. In addition to publicising the problem, knowledge of approaches, tools and methods to address the impacts effectively and efficiently should be enhanced. There is also a need to strengthen the understanding of cause and effect relations: the more successful mitigation efforts are, the less there is a need to adapt. There are also limits to adaptation.