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Some suggestions for the Adaptation agenda.

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1. Modalities for secretariat work.

The submission by Australia lists a number of modalities through which the Secretariat may undertake its work in support of SUBST and the COP. These include workshops, side events, information exchange, case studies, and desktop reviews. None of these modalities provides for the in-depth analysis of the technical aspects of complex questions related to adaptation. It is suggested therefore that provision be made for the establishment of short term task forces or study groups (6 to 12 months duration perhaps) that would enable a group of experts to examine technical questions in depth and suggest or formulate alternative ways of approaching them. Study Group Reports could present policy alternatives in creative ways and provide new options for the SUBSTA and the COP to consider. While the pros and cons of each could be described the reports would not be policy prescriptive. Thus the Study Groups (or task forces) would operate somewhat like the IPCC, (except on a much more focussed and short term basis), but would be able to go beyond the assessment role of IPCC in examining technical aspects of adaptation in a more creative manner.

2. Study Group of experts on insurance and similar financial measures for climate risks.

There is an opportunity for SUBSTA/COP to benefit from recent experience in the management of natural disasters including climate-related risks as well as earthquakes.

Subsequent to the UN Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-1999) a number of new initiatives have been taken by the World Bank, some Regional Development Banks, and others to develop capacity for public-private insurance and similar financial measures. Such measures could help spread the cost of natural disasters and to support rehabilitation and recovery as well as to promote adaptation and enhance resilience. The existence of insurance and/or similar financial measures is also expected to increase investor confidence and hence promote development.

These initiatives have been partially and briefly reported in a recent draft paper on climate insurance (Burton and Yohe 2003), and presented at UNFCCC and UNEP workshops. (Bonn, May 2003, and New Delhi, November 2003). At these workshops both the complexities and the potential value of insurance and similar financial measures received attention. A more thorough and in-depth examination of the methodology employed and the technical and financial dimensions of these initiatives would provide

SUBSTA/COP with information on which to base further consideration of ways in which to develop adaptation measures under the UNFCCC. This is a possible task for a study group of the kind described above under point 1.

3. Study Group of experts on recent experiences and methods developed for the incorporation of climate change risks into development activities. (suggestion prepared jointly with Joel Smith (Stratus Consulting).

A major question facing the development community is how climate change risks can best be incorporated (mainstreamed) into normal development activities. Anecdotal information and informal evidence suggests that this process is already well underway on an experimental basis in some jurisdictions. This has been reported in Canada for example as part of a study on the incorporation on climate change considerations (both adaptation and mitigation) into environmental impact assessment. (Federal, Provincial, Territorial, Climate Change and Environmental Assessment Working Group. August 2003).

In order to inform SUBSTA/COP of the progress that is being made and the methodologies being developed a synthesis of this experience would be helpful. As in the case of insurance a short-term task force or study group could be established to collect and review recent experience in factoring climate change into development activities including projects and policies and to provide this to SUBSTA.