



**UNITED
NATIONS**



**Framework Convention
on Climate Change**

Distr.
GENERAL

FCCC/SBI/2007/28
22 October 2007

Original: ENGLISH

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Twenty-seventh session

Bali, 3–11 December 2007

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

National communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

**Work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications
from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention**

**Progress report on the work of the Consultative Group of Experts
on National Communications from Parties not included
in Annex I to the Convention**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

This document contains the report on the outcomes of the ninth meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and outcomes of the workshop on the exchange of experiences and good practices among Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention in preparing national communications and on cross-cutting issues held in Cairo, Egypt, from 20 to 22 September 2007.

* This document was submitted after the due date in order to include the report of the ninth meeting of the CGE, held from 24 to 25 September 2007.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 3/CP.8, mandated the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) to provide technical advice to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) on matters relating to the implementation of the Convention by Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties). By the same decision, the COP requested the secretariat to facilitate the work of the CGE by coordinating meetings and workshops and compiling reports on its meetings and workshops for consideration by the SBI.

2. At its twenty-fifth session, the SBI endorsed the efforts of the CGE to implement its work programme for 2007, which included the workshop on exchange of experiences and good practices among non-Annex I Parties in preparing national communications and on cross-cutting issues involving project coordinators of national communications and experts working on the various sections of national communications.¹

B. Scope of the note

3. This note contains the report of the CGE on its ninth meeting, held in Cairo, Egypt, from 24 to 25 September 2007, and the outcomes of the workshop on exchange of experiences and good practices among non-Annex I Parties in preparing national communications and on cross-cutting issues held in Cairo, Egypt, from 20 to 22 September 2007.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

4. The SBI, after having considered the outcomes of the ninth meeting of the CGE, may wish to provide guidance on how to facilitate the exchange of information among experts on the preparation of national communications and on the application of the template on cross-cutting themes in national communications.

II. Report of the ninth meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts

5. Ms. Lilian Portillo chaired the ninth meeting of the CGE, which was attended by 20 members. The objective of the meeting was to prepare technical advice for the SBI based on deliberations of the CGE on the outcomes of the workshop on exchange of experiences and good practices among non-Annex I Parties in preparing national communications and on cross-cutting issues (see chapter III below) and the workshops organized by the National Communications Support Programme of the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme (NCSP) and by the Government of Australia. Other objectives were to finalize the technical report on how to integrate information contained in national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) into second and subsequent national communications, and to reflect on any outstanding issues under the CGE work programme for 2003–2007.

6. The Chair welcomed Mr. Yamil Bonduki, the new Coordinator of the NCSP, who was recently nominated as a CGE member.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2006/28, paragraph 26.

A. Provision of technical advice to Parties on the availability and use of tools and methodologies for bottom-up approaches to vulnerability and adaptation assessments

7. The SBI, at its twenty-fifth session, requested the CGE through the secretariat to continue to provide technical advice to Parties on the availability and use of tools and methodologies for bottom-up approaches on vulnerability and adaptation (V&A) assessments.² In response to this request, the CGE collaborated with the NCSP on its workshop in conducting coastal zone V&A assessments for Pacific island countries (PICs) held in Apia, Samoa, from 18 to 19 July 2007. The CGE also collaborated with the Government of Australia on a workshop on project development and implementation for the PICs held in the same location from 20 to 21 July 2007.

8. The CGE aimed to achieve the following objectives in collaborating at both workshops:
- (a) To ensure consistency in the preparation of national communications and improve their quality by presenting in detail the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention” to experts from PICs;
 - (b) To facilitate discussions on provision, upon request, of technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties in identifying country specific tools and methods needed for the preparation of national communications;
 - (c) To assist the PICs in improving the preparation of project proposals contained in national communications and in accessing financial and technical support for the preparation of their national communications.

9. Thirty-four participants from 11 PICs and 12 resource persons from seven international agencies attended the workshops mentioned in paragraph 7 above. A list of participants is posted on the NCSP website.³

1. Coastal zone vulnerability and adaptation assessments for Pacific island countries

10. The workshop on coastal zone V&A assessments was a follow-up requested by participants from the PICs to the CGE regional hands-on training workshop on V&A assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20 to 24 March 2006.

11. Methodologies for generating sea level rise scenarios and undertaking coastal vulnerability assessments were introduced to participants through presentations of concepts and hands-on exercises using computers. In particular, participants were trained in the application of the Dynamic and Interactive Vulnerability Assessment model (DIVA). While the participants appreciated the usefulness of top-down approaches in V&A assessments, they expressed the need for bottom-up approaches, such as community-driven assessments, to be able to assess the impacts of climate change and mobilize stakeholders in implementing adaptation measures. Participants discussed the two key issues raised concerning bottom-up approaches: how to scale up the process from a single community or locality to involve several communities and localities; and how to ensure robustness of V&A assessments as inputs into proposals for adaptation projects.

12. In response to the request made by the SBI to advise it on the provision of technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties in identifying tools and methods needed for preparing national communications,⁴ the participants of the workshop were requested to assess what type of information and/or technical advice

² FCCC/SBI/2006/28, paragraph 22.

³ <<http://ncsp.undp.org/docs/757.doc>>.

⁴ FCCC/SBI/2006/11, paragraph 26.

they will need from the CGE in order to complete their V&A assessments. They suggested a need for assistance in the following areas:

- (a) Development of community-driven and -led approaches to V&A assessments of coastal areas, water resources, agriculture and extreme weather events;
- (b) Incorporation of outcomes of V&A assessments into community and national planning processes;
- (c) Integration of measures identified in national communications into national policies such as environmental impact assessments;
- (d) Development of a NAPA-type methodological approach to conducting V&A assessments in the context of national communications.

2. Workshop on project development and implementation for the Pacific island countries

13. The workshop on project development and implementation for the PICs facilitated the exchange of views between Parties and funding agencies. A technical paper prepared by the CGE on ways to improve the reporting of projects identified in national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (FCCC/SBI/2007/7) and a background paper on stocktaking of financial and technical assistance needs and support resources/services available for the PICs were presented at the workshop. Funding agencies also presented their perspectives on how to improve the quality of project proposals and implementation of projects.

14. The participants conducted group exercises and held discussions on developing project proposals and project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. They identified the following steps to improve their capacity to prepare more effective project proposals:

- (a) Employment of full-time staff at the national level who understand the procedures of funding agencies in developing and approving projects;
- (b) Establishment of a rigorous process in V&A assessments to identify and prioritize adaptation needs for funding;
- (c) Integration of adaptation projects into national development programmes in order to ensure sustainability of projects;
- (d) Improvement in communication with donor agencies to facilitate access to financial and technical resources in the preparation of project proposals.

15. The participants recommended the following ways and means to improve access to financial resources to support projects identified in national communications:

- (a) To request the SBI to encourage bilateral, multilateral and international organizations to consider funding the priority projects identified by non-Annex I Parties in their vulnerability and adaptation assessments even prior to the completion of their national communications;
- (b) To encourage bilateral and multilateral funding agencies to simplify the processes of project application, to consult with the project recipients in the early stages of preparing the proposals, and to assist the PICs in understanding the guidelines for funding and for preparing project proposals;

- (c) Strengthening cooperation among national agencies to ensure broader participation in the development and implementation of projects on climate change;
- (d) Establishing a regional website to track and record projects, and to provide information on available funding for climate change projects to a wider audience.

B. Cooperation with other expert groups under the Convention and with the National Communications Support Programme of the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme

16. The CGE noted that cooperation among expert groups has been strengthened through regular bilateral meetings of the Chairs of the three expert groups under the UNFCCC (the CGE, the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)). Cooperation has also been strengthened through the meetings convened by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and participation of the members of the expert groups in events organized by the respective groups. In this regard, the Chair of the CGE reported the outcomes of her participation in the eleventh meeting of EGTT held in Bonn, Germany, from 4 to 5 May 2007, the meeting of the Chairs of the three expert groups convened by the SB Chairs at SBI 26 and the workshop on adaptation planning and practices under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change held in Rome, Italy, from 10 to 12 September 2007. CGE members were also present at the workshop on climate-related risks and extreme events under the Nairobi work programme held in Cairo, Egypt, from 18 to 20 June 2007, and the LEG stocktaking meeting on the preparation and implementation of NAPAs held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3 to 5 September 2007.

17. The engagement of the CGE in the events mentioned in paragraph 16 above facilitated better coordination and harmonization of actions among the expert groups. Possible areas for continued cooperation among the expert groups in the future include:

- (a) Provision of support to non-Annex I Parties for developing proposals based on projects identified in the national reports and assessments by, for example, preparing guidebooks and technical papers or conducting training workshops;
- (b) Integration of climate change issues into national development processes;
- (c) Adaptation issues, particularly the implementation of the Nairobi work programme.

18. The Coordinator of the NCSP gave a presentation on the latest activities undertaken by the NCSP. These included the PICs initiation workshop on second national communications held in Apia, Samoa, the Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning system training workshop held in Bangkok, Thailand, the Hadley Centre–NCSP joint workshop on the use of PRECIS and MAGICC/SCENGEN for regional climate scenario development held in Reading, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the training workshop on V&A assessments and climate risk management for coastal zones for South American countries held in Montevideo, Uruguay. In this regard, the CGE emphasized the need to work closely with the NCSP in the future.

C. Reflections on the work of the Consultative Group of Experts

19. In reflecting on the achievements of the CGE under its current mandate contained in decision 3/CP.8 and its work programme for 2003–2007, the group noted its contribution to channelling and facilitating the sharing of expertise, thus enhancing the capacities of non-Annex I Parties for preparing national communications, through the organization of six regional hands-on training workshops and two

global workshops involving about 400 non-Annex I Party experts in the areas of national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, V&A assessments, mitigation assessments and cross-cutting themes.

20. Members noted that the constructive working atmosphere and the desire and goodwill of members to be of service to non-Annex I Parties contributed to the effectiveness of the group in fulfilling its mandate. The active involvement of the group in the workshops, the technical background of its members and its openness to discussing divergent views also led to the success of the group in completing its work programme.

21. While acknowledging the achievements and the strengths of the group, members also recognized that more support is still needed by non-Annex I Parties to enhance their capacities and improve the quality of their national communications. In particular, Parties need technical support for the institutionalization of the national communications process and for integrating national communications into national development programmes.

22. Areas for improvement in the work of the CGE were also discussed during the meeting. These include ensuring that sufficient resources are provided to fulfil its mandate, increasing its effectiveness in supporting non-Annex I Parties, enhancing cooperation with international organizations that provide technical support to the preparation of national communications, being more proactive in assisting Parties and improving the timely processing of technical reports for the SBI.

III. Report on the workshop on exchange of experiences and good practices among non-Annex I Parties in preparing national communications and on cross-cutting issues

23. The workshop on exchange of experiences and good practices among non-Annex I Parties in preparing national communications and on cross-cutting issues was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 20 to 22 September 2007, through the kind invitation by the Government of Egypt through the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs. Forty-one participants attended the workshop from 33 countries, including 10 members of the CGE. Financial support for the workshop was provided by the Governments of Canada, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America. The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- (a) To exchange information among experts on good practices in preparing national communications in areas such as the establishment of management systems, promotion of regional cooperation, national communications in the context of national development planning, and capacity-building to ensure continuity of the work on national communications;
- (b) To exchange views among experts from non-Annex I Parties on how to report information under the section "Other information considered relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention" in national communications by using the template prepared by the CGE (see para. 30 below).

24. The workshop combined presentations, including national case studies, with discussion sessions to maximize the sharing of experiences and to harness the experience, knowledge and expertise of participants. The workshop sessions were designed to provide coordinated feedback on specific targeted issues, as well as providing open-ended consultative opportunities. More results, outcomes of the workshop and a list of participants are available at the UNFCCC website.⁵

⁵ <http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/cge/items/2885.php>.

A. Exchange of experiences and good practices in preparing national communications

25. As an introduction to the session on exchange of experiences and good practices in preparing national communications, an overview of managing the national communication process was presented to the participants. Background papers and national case studies on sustainability of the national communication process, South–South cooperation and integration of climate change into national development programmes were also presented and served as a basis for group discussions. The workshop discussion focused on the following good practices in national communications:

- (a) Clear institutional arrangements for producing the national communication, including defining specific roles and responsibilities of all actors involved;
- (b) Establishment and maintenance of teams that integrate the preparation of the national communication into their usual areas of work (such as GHG inventories, mitigation analysis and V&A);
- (c) Establishment of priority areas of work based on qualitative and/or quantitative assessments;
- (d) Documentation of methodologies, models, data and other key aspects of the analytical framework;
- (e) The existence or establishment of a data system to ensure that essential information and materials are preserved;
- (f) Quality assurance/quality control procedures;
- (g) Education, training and other means of building national capacity for producing national communications;
- (h) A plan to improve future national communications.

26. Participants acknowledged that some of the good practices discussed are being implemented, but reported that the following barriers are hindering their capacity to sustain the process of preparing national communications: inaccessibility and poor quality of data; lack of ministerial coordination and sectoral agency support and understanding of climate change issues; difficulties in maintaining and developing technical teams; lack of locally available information and knowledge on vulnerability and adaptation; delays to availability of funds; and lack of availability of local experts and resources.

27. In discussing South–South cooperation, participants listed a number of examples encompassing a range of modalities such as networking, technical support, joint projects and short-term visits of experts. The participants reported that the areas for cooperation may include sharing of information, skills enhancement and strengthening capacity of institutions involved in the preparation of national communications, such as meteorological agencies. South–South cooperation has also included exchange of technical expertise such as the development and use of regional climate models (e.g. PRECIS), use of data for vulnerability and adaptation projects (e.g. climate impacts on health and glacial melting), national GHG inventories and the clean development mechanism.

28. The discussions revealed that there are marked differences between regions in South–South cooperation activities, in that some regions are very active while others are still exploring opportunities for cooperation. In addition, the participants identified the following lessons learned:

- (a) The sharing of national experiences within regions enhances capacity of experts due to commonalities of geophysical conditions;

- (b) Sharing and extrapolating the results of climate scenarios is easier among countries with similar national circumstances;
- (c) South–South cooperation can save time and resources for a group of countries sharing activities in a project with common objectives. It may also assist in overcoming language barriers and easing exchange of information and lead to better outcomes.

29. The participants agreed that while South–South cooperation activities have increased in number over the years, there is still a need to expand the exchange of expertise among developing countries and with developed countries. The existing regional centres should be supported and strengthened in order to provide effective and efficient technical support to countries. The lack of information related to the availability of expertise on different climate change issues as well as on organizations that support activities relating to South–South cooperation is one of the key barriers.

B. Template on cross-cutting themes in national communications

30. At SBI 26, the CGE presented the template on cross-cutting themes in national communications from non-Annex I Parties (FCCC/SBI/2007/3) in response to a request from the SBI. The SBI invited non-Annex I Parties to use, on a voluntary basis, the tables contained in the template for the provision of information considered relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention, as referred to in the annex to decision 17/CP.8. It also requested the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to prepare information materials for dissemination to relevant experts from non-Annex I Parties, drawing on, inter alia, the template.⁶

31. In the second session of the workshop, the participants provided feedback on the use of the template by analysing its content using an innovative interactive approach. This allowed an in-depth analysis of all seven of the tables in the template including comments and recommendations. Further discussions took place in small group sessions on how to collect, process and report information in national communications on research and systematic observation, technology transfer, capacity-building, education, training and public awareness, and information and networking. The following are highlights of the feedback from participants:

- (a) It may become easier to apply the template once experts have more experience in discussing and identifying the range of technical information to be included in the section on other information considered relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention in the national communication;
- (b) It was reiterated that the template reflects decisions that have been taken by the Convention in the negotiation process. As such, the template provides Parties with a guide on how to report on progress in implementing the decisions of the Convention;
- (c) It would be useful to include results-oriented information, including main benefits, results achieved, lessons learned and how to overcome barriers in every table in the template/area of reporting.

C. Key recommendations

32. The key recommendations made by the participants at the workshop are to:

- (a) Organize further global and/or regional workshops on integrating climate change into relevant national planning processes and using the national communication as a tool for the integration process;

⁶ FCCC/SBI/2007/15, paragraphs 27–28.

- (b) Consider holding further workshops and briefing sessions on engaging key stakeholders, including high-level policymakers and the media;
- (c) Develop further supporting materials to assist Parties in their reporting, including through the development of a guide to good practices in preparing national communications and a more user-friendly version of the template on cross-cutting themes;
- (d) Make greater use of experts from developing countries as trainers and experts, and develop methods to provide better access to existing rosters of experts, including through use of regional research centres and the strengthening of online assistance;
- (e) Increase knowledge and understanding of regional efforts in the developing country regions by disseminating information and/or creating knowledge networks to increase opportunities for sharing experiences and South–South cooperation activities.

33. The CGE noted the inputs provided by the participants during the workshop, particularly in improving the usefulness of the template on cross-cutting themes in national communications, and made the following recommendations:

- (a) Non-Annex I Parties should take note that the template may be used as a guide to Parties in the collection of information on cross-cutting themes. The synthesized information may then be transformed into a narrative and presented in the most appropriate form in the national communications;
- (b) Implementing agencies are encouraged to provide the above-mentioned information to Parties when disseminating the template;
- (c) Non-Annex I Parties are encouraged to use the template to assist them in the collection of information in the early stages of the national communication process;
- (d) Suggestions on how to improve the template that were provided by the participants at the workshop may be used to inform any future updates to the template.
