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Implementation of Article 4, paragraphs 8 and 9, of the Convention

Matters relating to the least developed countries

**Report on the thirteenth meeting of the Least Developed Countries
Expert Group**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The terms of reference of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) stipulate that the LEG shall meet twice each year and that its function is to advise on the strategy for preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). In response to an offer by the Government of Yemen, the thirteenth meeting of the group was held in Sana'a, Yemen, from 14 to 16 April 2008. As this was the first meeting of the group in its fourth term, the proceedings focused on developing a comprehensive work programme for the period 2008–2010, as requested by decision 8/CP.13. The work programme contains objectives, activities and expected outcomes, and takes into account the results of a stocktaking meeting on NAPAs held in 2007 and the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The meeting also resulted in the election of new officers. Upon an initiative by the focal point of Yemen, the LEG also devoted a session to interacting with Yemen's NAPA team, which had recently prepared its draft NAPA. Both the LEG and the NAPA team benefited from questions and feedback during this interaction.

* This document was submitted after the due date as a result of the timing of the meeting.

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I. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 29/CP.7, established the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), initially for a period of two years. Subsequently the COP extended the mandate of the group twice, each time for a period of two years (decisions 7/CP.9 and 4/CP.11).

2. The COP, by its decision 8/CP.13, extended the mandate of the LEG for three more years and requested the group to develop a work programme that contains its objectives, activities and expected outcomes, and takes into account the results of a stocktaking meeting¹ on national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) held in September 2007 and the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation at its twenty-eighth session.

II. Summary of the thirteenth meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

A. Proceedings

3. The Minister of Water and Environment of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Eryani, opened and closed the LEG meeting. In his opening remarks, he highlighted the importance of the NAPA in advancing adaptation planning for Yemen and the need for effective implementation immediately upon completion of the preparation phase. A representative of the secretariat gave an overview of NAPAs and how they have served as useful mechanisms for least developed countries (LDCs) to communicate their urgent and immediate vulnerabilities to climate change, and resulted in national capacity being built for adaptation to climate change during the preparation and implementation of NAPAs. She underscored the important role that NAPAs are playing in serving as a first step in national adaptation efforts in LDCs. In his remarks, the Chair of the LEG, Mr. Bubu Jallow, highlighted the main achievements of the LEG in supporting LDCs since the establishment of the LEG in 2001, and expressed full support of the LEG to the Yemeni NAPA team and other teams as they finalize their NAPAs and prepare to implement priority activities.

B. Election of officers of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

4. In accordance with paragraph 5 of the LEG terms of reference,² the LEG is to elect annually a Chair, a Vice-Chair and two rapporteurs from among its LDC members. At its thirteenth meeting the group elected the following officers:

- (a) Mr. Bubu Jallow (Gambia), Chair
- (b) Mr. Mohamed Shareef (Maldives), Vice-Chair
- (c) Mr. Djibril Ibila (Benin), francophone Rapporteur
- (d) Mr. Adérito Manuel Fernandes Santana (Sao Tome and Principe), lusophone Rapporteur
- (e) Mr. Benjamin Karmorh (Liberia), anglophone Rapporteur.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2007/32.

² Decision 29/CP.7, annex.

C. Review of the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action

1. Status of national adaptation programme of action preparation and additional guidance

5. In reviewing the status of NAPA implementation, the LEG welcomed the 32 NAPAs that were submitted to the secretariat by 14 April 2008. As a result of the interaction of the LEG with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its agencies, several countries are at an advanced stage of preparation and many of them expect to submit their NAPAs during 2008. Some countries are about to start the preparation process, and a few have not submitted a proposal for funding for the preparation phase because of political difficulties in their countries.

6. The LEG noted concerns by some LDC Parties about difficulties faced during the preparation phase, such as technical difficulties in finalizing proposals for funding for the preparation of NAPAs, and the length of time taken to gain GEF approval and to access funds for the preparation through the GEF agencies. The LEG also noted, with concern, the gradual reduction in efforts to assist countries to prepare NAPAs, as emphasis shifts towards the implementation of completed NAPAs.

7. The LEG took note of the rich feedback on the NAPA preparation process received during the 2007 stocktaking meeting and the many areas in which Parties would benefit from additional guidance and capacity-building. The LEG reviewed the guidelines for the preparation of NAPAs,³ including the LEG annotations,⁴ and noted several areas that require further elaboration, to take into account lessons learned and changes that have been introduced by the GEF in the processing of proposals for funding. In particular, the LEG noted the need to enhance its advice to Parties, still in the preparation phase, to modify the format and content of project profiles in order to better address requirements for the preparation of project information forms (PIFs) which are submitted to the GEF. Previous project profiles were based on project development format A (PDF-A) as described in the 2001 NAPA guidelines.

8. The LEG noted with satisfaction the degree of integration of NAPAs and NAPA priorities in national development plans and activities. To improve how this integration is reported in NAPAs, the LEG recommended additional annotation to the guidelines, so that countries can show clearly how the integration was achieved, and how NAPA activities are aligned with activities and projects proposed under national development plans such as the poverty reduction strategies.

9. The LEG noted that additional guidance on the preparation of NAPAs is urgently needed to assist countries that are facing particular difficulties to complete their NAPAs as soon as possible, so that they can implement activities in a timely fashion.

2. Synthesis and analysis of completed national adaptation programmes of action

10. A synthesis of completed NAPAs that were presented during the 2007 stocktaking meeting provided the basis for analysis of the NAPA process. The LEG used the analysis to discuss concerns raised on completed NAPAs, for example that some NAPAs are not adequately mainstreamed into national development and that they do not involve stakeholders from multiple sectors and disciplines. As more Parties complete their NAPAs, further analysis will provide additional information and useful lessons.

11. The LEG discussed the appropriate use of information presented in NAPAs, and indicated that the information on the costs of activities as contained in project profiles of NAPAs should be used as a

³ Decision 28/CP.7, annex.

⁴ "Annotated guidelines for NAPA preparation",

http://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/ldc/application/pdf/annguide.pdf.

guide only, and not as an accurate assessment of costs of adaptation for LDCs. The LEG recalled how NAPAs only identify urgent and immediate adaptation needs, but do not elaborate comprehensive adaptation plans for the country. The LEG welcomed efforts by LDC Parties to conduct their preparation phase taking into account methods that best suit their local conditions. To this end, the LEG would like to caution users of NAPA documents not to assess NAPA preparation solely against the NAPA guidelines. At the same time, the LEG welcomes comprehensive reporting of all important steps of NAPA preparation, especially the degree of multiple stakeholder involvement and alignment of NAPA activities to national development priorities. The LEG noted the value of the information collected during NAPA preparation for subsequent assessments, and encourages LDC Parties to take necessary steps to consolidate this information for use in future assessments such as for the preparation of national communications.

D. Consideration of the implementation of national adaptation programmes of action

1. Status of implementation of national adaptation programmes of action

12. The LEG reviewed the status of implementation of NAPAs based on inputs provided by the GEF secretariat, and noted the 16 projects under consideration by the GEF. One project for Bhutan was approved in March 2008 for full implementation.

2. Development of an implementation strategy

13. Some LDC Parties are actively developing strategies to fund NAPAs using multiple sources, including bilateral sources, as well as through donor-coordinated efforts at the national level through direct budget support or sector-wide approaches. During the stocktaking meeting in 2007 the LEG had taken note of requests for it to develop guidance on implementation of NAPAs, to assist NAPA teams to navigate information requirements in preparing project proposals for funding by the GEF and other sources, and to provide easily accessible answers to common questions about technical aspects of project development. As a result, the LEG proposed that a step-by-step guide for the implementation of NAPAs be developed, taking into account the latest developments in project development under the GEF and other sources of funding. The LEG further noted the urgency with which this guide should be developed and used in capacity-building efforts with NAPA teams as they begin implementation.

3. Periodic review of risks and prioritization of activities

14. The LEG noted that it may be necessary for LDCs to carry out the step of periodically reviewing risks and prioritizing activities, as shown on page 31 of the "Annotated guidelines for NAPA preparation", given the time it takes to start the implementation phase after a NAPA is submitted. Such a reality check when NAPAs are, say, one year old or more, would ensure that countries are addressing the most urgent and immediate needs during the implementation phase.

4. Surveys

15. The LEG underscored the value of continuing to conduct surveys on the status of, and experiences during, NAPA preparation, and on the status of implementation of NAPAs, during the sessions of the subsidiary bodies. The feedback that LDC Parties provide through these surveys is critical in addressing obstacles that NAPA teams may be facing. These surveys would also enable information to be collected about implementation of NAPA activities, in addition to information about activities funded through the GEF.

5. Resources and capacity-building to support design of an implementation strategy

16. The 2007 stocktaking meeting highlighted the difficulties that LDCs are facing in developing project proposals and in designing effective implementation strategies for their NAPAs. The LEG discussed options for building the capacity of NAPA teams in order to assist LDCs in overcoming these problems. Lessons learned by those countries that have successfully submitted proposals for funding would be a useful resource.

E. Interaction between the Least Developed Countries Expert Group and the Yemeni national adaptation programme of action team

17. In keeping with its practice of interacting with NAPA teams of the meeting's host country, the LEG conducted an interactive session with representatives of the Yemeni NAPA team.

18. The Yemeni NAPA team reported its completion of a draft of its NAPA, which it submitted to the LEG for comments immediately after the meeting. The team presented the LEG with its main findings, and reported on the detailed steps used for the water, agriculture and coastal systems, on prioritization of activities, and on identifying urgent and immediate projects for implementation. It detailed the extensive national consultations that were held on gender and language issues and on the scope of involvement of national experts and their related agencies in the preparation of the NAPA. The NAPA team faced particular difficulties with the translation of many documents that were used in the NAPA preparation, and noted the need to translate the whole NAPA document into Arabic for dissemination to stakeholders at the national level. The need to explain local perceptions of climate change in scientific terms was noted, because many local communities are experiencing changes in climate that they cannot fully explain.

19. The NAPA team found the responses and coping strategies of local communities to be valuable and useful in the design of activities to be included in the draft NAPA. The team also explained its efforts to mainstream the NAPA activities into broader national planning. LEG members commented on the value of sharing lessons learned by different NAPA teams with those countries that are starting to prepare their NAPAs.

20. The Yemeni NAPA team explained that it expects implementation to proceed swiftly, and information provided by the GEF indicates that two PIFs for implementation have already been submitted.

III. Work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group for 2008–2010

21. In preparing its work programme (see annex I), the LEG noted that its ongoing efforts to fulfil its mandate, as detailed in decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (a)–(e), continue to be relevant and will serve as the principal means of supporting NAPA implementation.

22. The LEG considered it essential to keep under review the activities detailed in its mandate, based on NAPAs submitted and drafts of NAPAs referred to it for comments. It considered that it has a continuing need to provide technical guidance and advice on the preparation of NAPAs, to advise on capacity-building, to facilitate the exchange of information and to advise on efforts to mainstream adaptation into development planning. It also recognized that the bulk of its work over the next three years will be in providing advice and capacity-building on NAPA implementation.

23. The LEG also considered that closer collaboration with the GEF and its agencies will continue to be important in the NAPA preparation and implementation phases, because technical and institutional constraints on NAPA preparation and implementation continue to arise.

Annex I

Work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group for 2008–2010

Mandate	Objectives	Activities	Expected outcomes
<p>Decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (a). To provide technical guidance and advice on [preparation] including the identification of possible sources of data and its subsequent application and interpretation, upon request by least developed country (LDC) Parties</p>	<p>To enhance support to LDCs preparing national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further support preparation of NAPAs through a technical paper that further elaborates and updates steps in NAPA preparation in response to recent methodological needs identified by LDC Parties • Conduct a survey with LDC Parties at subsidiary body sessions and through national focal points to collect information about the status of preparation of NAPAs and on any obstacles that Parties may be facing during the preparation phase • Synthesize and analyse completed NAPAs to extract and disseminate lessons learned • Enhance efforts to support LDCs with special needs, including those arising from language constraints or emergence from recent conflicts, by mobilizing people and organizations in a position to assist • Prepare outreach materials on NAPAs in multiple formats and media for use by national NAPA teams during NAPA preparation and in designing implementation strategies • Interact with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its agencies during meetings of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and other events, to address obstacles faced by countries in their efforts to prepare NAPAs as promptly as possible, as well as other concerns raised by Parties during the 2007 stocktaking meeting and in their responses to surveys by the LEG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New developments in the NAPA process and lessons learned are taken into account in NAPAs being prepared • Results of surveys are synthesized and used to find solutions for identified obstacles to successful NAPA preparation • LDC Parties with special needs are assisted in a timely manner • Direct interaction with the GEF and its agencies leads to fast resolution of problems that LDC Parties may be facing in preparing their NAPAs

Mandate	Objectives	Activities	Expected outcomes
<p>Decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (a). To provide technical guidance and advice ... on the implementation strategy of NAPAs, including the identification of possible sources of data and its subsequent application and interpretation, upon request by LDC Parties</p> <p>Decision 4/CP.11, paragraph 2. To develop a work programme that includes implementation of NAPAs</p>	<p>To enhance support to LDCs in their NAPA implementation strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and disseminate a step-by-step guide on NAPA implementation to be used as a resource by NAPA teams in designing successful implementation strategies • Further support NAPA implementation through a technical paper that elaborates and updates guidance on implementation strategies for NAPAs, building on lessons learned from LDC Parties that are implementing their NAPAs • Conduct a survey with LDC Parties at subsidiary body sessions and through national focal points to collect information about the status of implementation of NAPAs and on any obstacles that Parties may be facing • Synthesize and analyse completed NAPAs to identify opportunities for regional and thematic synergy during the implementation phase, and provide information on key vulnerabilities and proposed adaptation activities in LDCs to interested Parties and agencies • Enhance efforts to support LDCs with special needs by mobilizing people and organizations in a position to assist in implementation of NAPAs, including through South-South cooperation • Prepare outreach materials on NAPAs in multiple formats and media for use by NAPA teams in designing implementation strategies • Interact with the GEF and its agencies during LEG meetings and at other times, to address obstacles faced by countries in their efforts to implement NAPAs and other concerns raised by Parties during the stocktaking meeting and in their responses to surveys by the LEG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guide assists LDC Parties to design effective implementation strategies • LDC NAPA teams are well informed about opportunities for implementation, and more NAPA activities are implemented • Results of surveys are synthesized and used to find solutions for identified obstacles to successful NAPA implementation • Outcomes of NAPAs are communicated effectively to potential donors and project developers • LDC Parties with special needs are assisted in a timely manner • NAPA teams have access to outreach materials needed to effectively design successful implementation strategies • Direct interaction with the GEF and its agencies leads to fast resolution of problems that LDC Parties may be facing in developing project proposals for implementation of NAPAs

Mandate	Objectives	Activities	Expected outcomes
Decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (b). To serve in an advisory capacity to the LDCs, for the preparation and strategy for implementation of NAPAs through, inter alia, workshops, upon request by LDC Parties	To continue to provide advice and support to LDCs through workshops and other outreach activities in the NAPA preparation and implementation phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize training workshops on design of NAPA implementation strategies based on the step-by-step guide that will be prepared in work under decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (a) • Address critical capacity-building needs identified in the stocktaking meeting • Conduct other capacity-building and outreach activities as requested by Parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of NAPA teams to design implementation strategies is greatly enhanced • Requests made by LDC Parties to the LEG for support in preparation and implementation of NAPAs are fully addressed
Decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (c). To advise on capacity-building needs for the preparation and implementation of NAPAs and to provide recommendations, as appropriate, taking into account the Capacity Development Initiative of the Global Environment Facility and other relevant capacity-building initiatives	To continue to advise on capacity-building needs and collaborate with other relevant initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify technical capacity-building needs in relation to access to, and management of, NAPA-related data and information and explore solutions with relevant actors • Formulate general advice aimed at strengthening technical and institutional capacity to undertake the implementation and monitoring of projects • Expand the LDC web page <www.unfccc.int/ldc>, including developing a section on frequently asked questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAPA teams improve their data and knowledge management and contribute to preparation of national communications and other relevant assessments • Capacity is built for implementation and monitoring adaptation activities • Awareness of NAPA teams on processes and procedures in the preparation and implementation of NAPAs is greatly enhanced

Mandate	Objectives	Activities	Expected outcomes
Decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (d). To facilitate the exchange of information and to promote regional synergies, and synergies with other multilateral environment conventions, in the preparation and in the implementation strategy of NAPAs	To continue collaborative efforts aimed at promoting cooperation and synergy among and between expert groups and other relevant actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with, and catalyse action by, relevant organizations in supporting implementation of the LEG work programme • Promote regional and thematic synergy in implementing NAPAs with activities in national action programmes under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity through joint activities during the implementation phase • Conduct regional workshops for NAPA teams to share experiences and explore joint activities • Contribute to the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change through outreach on the NAPA approach • Continue to cooperate with the Expert Group on Technology Transfer in the assessment of adaptation technology needs discerned from NAPAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant United Nations agencies and other organizations fully support NAPA teams in preparation and implementation of NAPAs • Effectiveness in project implementation is enhanced through synergy between programmes and at the regional level, where this adds value • Improved awareness and sharing of experiences and solutions, especially at the regional level and by sector • Increased outreach to the Nairobi work programme drawing on the vast experience with the NAPA process • Technology needs identified in NAPAs are included in discussions on technology transfer
Decision 29/CP.7, annex, paragraph 9 (e). To advise on the mainstreaming of NAPAs into regular development planning in the context of national strategies for sustainable development	To enhance provision of advice to LDC Parties on the mainstreaming of NAPAs and NAPA activities into regular development planning during preparation and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize completed NAPAs to show evidence of alignment to, and integration of NAPA activities into, national development priorities and plans in the NAPA process • Support and further promote integration of adaptation and NAPAs into national development policies, including through additional guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved public awareness of the degree of integration of NAPA preparation and implementation • LDCs are provided with additional guidance on integration based on lessons learned
Decision 8/CP.13, paragraph 2. To develop a work programme that takes into account the Nairobi work programme	To contribute to the work of the Nairobi work programme experiences in integrating bottom-up and top-down approaches in vulnerability and adaptation assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a publication that describes the NAPA approach, giving tools and methods for each step of the NAPA preparation process, and disseminate it widely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved knowledge base under the Nairobi work programme on methods and tools, and in the practice of adaptation

Annex II**Members of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group
as at 31 March 2008**

Mr. Mirza Shawkat Ali	Bangladesh
Mr. Djibril Ibila	Benin
Mr. Adérito Manuel Fernandes Santana	Sao Tome and Principe
Mr. Bubu Jallow	Gambia
Mr. Benjamin Karmorh	Liberia
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Ms. Beth Lavender	Canada
Mr. Fred Machulu Onduri	Uganda
Mr. Russell Nari	Vanuatu
Mr. Mohamed Shareef	Maldives
Mr. Batu Krishna Uprety	Nepal
Mr. Adrianus Jan Verhagen	Netherlands
