Submission to NWP from SIWI on behalf of the Water and Climate Coalition

Proposals for activities under the Nairobi Work Programme - strengthening sector-specific and cross-sectorial activities relating to water

The Water and Climate Coalition welcomes the opportunity to contribute with proposals for upcoming activities under the Nairobi Work Programme. This submission is in response to FCCC/SBSTA/2011/L.13; 
“The SBSTA invited Parties and relevant organizations to submit to the secretariat by September 19 2011, their proposals for upcoming activities under the Nairobi Work programme, taking into consideration the information included in the annex”.

General comments and concerns

The Water and Climate Coalition (WCC) brings together stakeholders from the global water and climate community to promote progressive and integrated international water and climate change policy. WCC currently consists of 13 members and 3 collaborative partners. The coalition has taken an active role as an observer organization to the UNFCCC negotiations since 2009, but many members have followed the negotiations since their beginning. The Coalition finds that there is a need for better interaction between the Convention process and water expertise in order to inform the decision making process.

Climate change is to a great extent water change. Water is the primary medium through which climate change impacts will be felt by humans and the environment. Moreover, water is critical for climate change mitigation, as many efforts to reduce carbon emissions rely on water availability for their long-term success. Global warming will impact the hydrological patterns that determine the availability of water. Many of the world’s most water-stressed areas will get less water, and water flows will become less predictable and more subject to extreme events. Building resilience to climate change requires “upgrading” the management of water as a resource as well as a hazard. The interconnectedness of water and climate change is not just expressed through adaptation, but also through mitigation. The success of most mitigation intervention depends upon the availability and sustainability of water resources – for example the carbon sequestration potential of forests is influenced by the availability of water, the carbon mitigation potential of agricultural practices depends upon a sustainable freshwater supply. Therefore it is critical that the cross-cutting nature of water is sufficiently acknowledged and that water management is fully integrated into climate change mitigation.


adaptation and mitigation measures. Only then can we ensure long-term resilience of water systems and safeguard access to water as a human right.

Water cannot be viewed as a sector but a cross-cutting natural resource upon which all ecosystem health and social and economic activities depend. Water creates inter-dependencies between social and ecological systems and proper management is critical to numerous sectors that are key to development and to human well-being.

The WCC welcomes the SBSTA decision that water will be addressed in the Nairobi Work Programme. Since water is a cross-cutting resource as well as a hazard, the knowledge and expertise of water community needs to be brought into the core of the Nairobi Work Programme. Water experts deal daily with climate variability and disaster risk reduction, sharing of water resources across national borders, sustainable water use in agriculture and building resilience. Water creates inter-dependencies between social and ecological systems and proper management is critical to numerous sectors that are key to development and to human well-being. When this is fully recognized, the long-term resilience of water systems can be ensured and access to water as a human right be safeguarded. Moreover, there is a need to identify ways for bridging the divide between the “climate community”, water resource practitioners and decision responsible for adaptation implementation. This can be accomplished by targeted workshops, training seminars or briefings for the negotiators and policy makers at national level.

Further, the Coalition appreciates the clear position of SBSTA, determining; “the need for the NWP to further support work carried out under the SBI and, as appropriate, possible future work of the Adaptation Committee through the provision of scientific and technical information on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change”. It is vital that the knowledge products, stakeholders dialogue and information sharing is brought forward to inform implementation actions. This is highly relevant for example for the implementation of the NAPAs/NAPs.

Finally, the Coalition wants to stress the importance of NWP activities to be developed in close connection to the Adaptation Committee, so that knowledge gathered under the NWP can inform the decision making processes of the COP and its subsidiary bodies and to safeguard that different processes on adaptation under the UNFCCC are coherent and efficient.

**Suggested activities**

In order to address the issues raised above the Water and Climate Coalition is suggesting the following activity:

1. **Develop a thematic focus initiative on water resources under the Nairobi Work Programme**

Since the NWP serves as a platform for the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge through which adaptation implementation is supported, the cross cutting nature of water and climate change truly warrants specific attention. Therefore, the Coalition suggests that a specific thematic focus initiative on water resources is developed under the NWP. The thematic focus initiative should address the 9 areas of work under the NWP, aiming at providing an interface for integrating water expertise into the different areas. In addition the focus initiative should become a
vehicle for integrating water resources management into adaptive strategies for other sectors, like agriculture, energy and health.

2. Organize a technical workshop on increasing the role of water management and water resource use in building climate resilience at the 36th session of SBSTA
In order to facilitate dialogue and integration, the Coalition suggests that a workshop on the role of water management in building climate resilience and adapting to climate change is organized by the UNFCCC secretariat at the 36th session of SBSTA. The aim of the workshop would be to bring together water expertise and Parties to discuss how adaptation activities under the UNFCCC in the best way support relevant ongoing activities and how additional resources could strengthen support to countries to:

- Develop mechanisms whereby climate change risk is integrated into relevant plans, policies and strategies which have direct or indirect relevance to water resource management and, integrate these in development planning and poverty reduction programmes;
- Develop partnerships and strengthen institutional capacity and stakeholders to increase climate resilience thought improved water management;
- Develop financial strategies and for bridging gaps between local knowledge and national policy

The workshop should build on the NWP Knowledge Product on Freshwater and the Technical paper on water and climate change impacts, requested by SBSTA at its 34th session. In addition, the workshop should be set up as an interactive dialogue between country representatives, water practitioners, academia and NGOs.

3. Water as making it a cross-cutting benchmark in the NWP, supporting the work carried out under the SBI
As already stated above, the Coalition considers it of vital importance that the work of SBSTA and SBI are carried forward in a coordinated manner, so that intelligence captured and discussed under SBSTA can inform the processes of the SBI. The Coalition suggests that water resources management provides useful examples in the requested joint SBSTA/SBI in session workshop to consider the outcome of the Nairobi work programme, to highlight the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change most relevant to the SBI (FCCC/SBSTA/2011/L.13-7d).

Water resource management is central to a countries ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This means that all efforts should be made in the convention process to ensure that the necessary expertise and knowledge is available to enhance the efforts of countries in order to ensure that climate change and water change are addressed in a sustainable manner. Building blocks which help achieving long term resilience to climate change can be analyzed through the water lens – for example institutional capacity building, stakeholder involvement, integration across sectors, bridging between local knowledge and national decision making processes and implementation of funding mechanisms on the ground. WCC would happily facilitate a Water Day event, in order to highlight the centrality of water and hoping that the deliberations, expertise and knowledge availed will permeate the discussions in the negotiations and inform national policy deliberations.
In the future work of the NWP, the Coalition suggests that the secretariat sets up a specific focus area for facilitating the development of partnerships and capacity of institutions and stakeholders for long term integration of water resources management in climate adaptation schemes and plans.