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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: report on the hands- on training workshop for the Africa region on mitigation assessment

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) conducted a hands-on training workshop for the Africa region on mitigation assessment, which was held in Accra, Ghana, from 10 to 14 September 2012. This report outlines the proceedings of the workshop and summarizes the presentations, including the presentations made using the updated CGE training materials on mitigation assessment, and the feedback and recommendations received from the participants.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by decision 5/CP.15, reconstituted the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) for the period 2010–2012 in order to provide support to Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) in the process of, and the preparation of, their national communications.
2. The work programme of the CGE for 2010–2012 developed at its 1st meeting, held in Bonn, Germany, in March 2010, was welcomed and taken note of by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its thirty-second session.¹
3. In accordance with its work programme referred to in paragraph 2 above, the CGE held a hands-on training workshop for the Africa region on mitigation assessment, in Accra, Ghana, from 10 to 14 September 2012 with a view to enhancing the capacity of national experts from the region to conduct the mitigation assessment and report the results of this assessment in their national communications.
4. By decision 5/CP.15, the COP requested the secretariat to facilitate the work of the CGE by organizing meetings and workshops and by compiling the reports of these meetings and workshops for consideration by the SBI.

B. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

5. The SBI, having considered this report, may wish to take note of the recommendations made by the workshop participants and provide further guidance to the CGE on the provision of technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties in the preparation of their national communications.

II. Proceedings of the workshop

A. Opening of the workshop

6. The hands-on training workshop for the Africa region on mitigation assessment was hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency – Ghana (EPA), on behalf of the Government of Ghana, from 10 to 14 September 2012, in Accra.
7. The opening of the workshop was chaired by Mr. E.O. Nsenkyire, Chairman of Ghana's National Climate Change Committee. He welcomed the participants to Accra and stated that he was confident that the workshop would further strengthen the capacity of African experts and equip them with the requisite skills to conduct mitigation assessments and find cutting-edge solutions to address climate change.
8. Ms. Ruleta Camacho (Antigua and Barbuda), Chair of the CGE, in her opening statement, welcomed the participants and thanked the EPA for putting in place excellent arrangements for the hosting of the workshop. She expressed her sincere hope that the workshop would contribute towards improving the quality of national communications in the Africa region and that the participants would be able to apply the skills gained during

¹ FCCC/SBI/2010/10, paragraph 21.

the workshop to successfully conduct mitigation assessments and identify implementable mitigation actions to contribute towards addressing climate change in their respective countries.

9. A representative of the secretariat also welcomed the participants to the workshop, and thanked the Government of Ghana for hosting the workshop and for its hospitality. He highlighted the need to ensure that the mitigation assessments that countries are undertaking are aligned with other processes, such as technology needs assessments and the preparation of their nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) and low-emission development strategies.

10. In his opening statement, Mr. Daniel S. Amlalo, Executive Director of EPA, stated that Ghana's commitment to pursue a climate-compatible economy while achieving sustainable development and equitable low-carbon economic growth is well articulated in its national development strategy. He added that the hosting of this workshop in Accra is extremely beneficial to Ghana as it begins the preparation of its third national communication, the preparation and prioritization of its NAMAs, and the preparation of its first biennial update report (BUR).

11. Dr. Mustapha Ahmed, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology of Ghana, in his keynote address, stated that climate change has become central to economic development in most developing countries. He highlighted some of the concrete initiatives undertaken by Ghana to address climate change. Ghana is currently finalizing its national climate change policy, which is expected to provide a broad vision for addressing climate change consistent with its medium-term development plan. The low-carbon development component of the national climate change policy provides specific policy statements on Ghana's aspiration to align to a low-carbon development pathway. Ghana has enacted its Renewable Energy Act in 2011 and is currently designing a feed-in tariff scheme. A national action plan on sustainable energy for all by 2030 has also been prepared.

12. A representative of the secretariat outlined the objectives of the workshop and provided a brief overview of its organization.

13. The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

(a) To build the capacity of the national experts of the Africa region to undertake mitigation assessment in the context of non-Annex I national communications by introducing them to recent scientific knowledge, and various tools and methodologies;

(b) To seek feedback from the participants on ways to further enhance the updated CGE training materials on mitigation assessment;

(c) To serve as a platform for the exchange of views among participants and with the experts.

14. A total of 45 national experts from 39 non-Annex I Parties² and four members of the CGE attended the workshop.

15. The workshop was held with the financial support of the United States of America.

16. An average of 10 participants per day took part online in the workshop through the use of WebEx.

² Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

B. Organization of the work

17. The hands-on training workshop, conducted over five days, comprised seven modules as follows:

(a) The first module was an introductory one, which provided a general overview of the scientific basis of climate change and the context for addressing it;

(b) The second module focused on mitigation in the context of the national communications of non-Annex I Parties and provided participants with an overview of experiences and lessons learned in conducting mitigation assessment. This module also included country presentations in which representatives of seven countries from the region presented their experience in conducting mitigation assessments in the context of the preparation of their national communications;

(c) The third module provided participants with an overview of the purpose, key steps and design considerations involved in conducting mitigation assessment, and issues involved in building upon these assessments to develop more detailed national climate change action plans. It also consisted of a group exercise in which participants developed mitigation cost curves and mitigation potentials for various greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation policies in a fictitious country;

(d) The fourth module included presentations on mitigation options, issues and barriers by sector. It also consisted of a group exercise in which participants conducted screening of GHG mitigation options using multicriteria analysis;

(e) The fifth module introduced participants to commonly used methods and modelling tools that can be applied when conducting mitigation assessment, including the advantages, limitations, data and technical requirements of each approach. The participants worked in groups to construct a simple mitigation scenario using the Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning System (LEAP);

(f) The sixth module consisted of presentations on reporting mitigation assessment in national communications as per the “Guidelines for the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention” (hereinafter referred to as the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties);

(g) The last module presented participants with examples of documentation toolkits, which interested countries may use to develop and maintain mitigation assessment processes nationally;

(h) Finally, there was an interactive discussion moderated by the Chair of the CGE in which participants discussed and raised points about the organization and content of the workshop, and also technical, institutional and financial constraints and issues faced by countries in preparing their national communications. They also provided recommendations on possible ways in which to further improve the CGE training materials and on how future regional workshops could be conducted.

18. The training, which included hands-on practical sessions, was conducted by resource persons and the CGE members using the draft updated CGE training materials.³

³ The current CGE training materials, available on the UNFCCC website at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/training_material/methodological_documents/items/349.php, are in the process of being updated.

III. Summary of presentations

A. Mitigating climate change

19. The first module provided participants with an introduction to key issues related to climate change mitigation, including a general overview of the scientific basis and context for addressing climate change. It consisted of presentations on key sources, sinks and sectors of GHG emissions, and the potential benefits of mitigation actions, including their relationship with the broader issues of sustainability and development, and the interaction between mitigation and adaptation.

B. Mitigation in the context of national communications

20. This module provided participants with an introduction to climate change mitigation in the context of the Convention, including mitigation in the context of national communications, experiences and lessons learned in reporting on mitigation, and recent developments related to mitigation under the Convention.

21. It provided participants with the context for conducting and reporting on mitigation assessments in the national communications from non-Annex I Parties, and outlined the benefits of the process and of the preparation of national communications. The presentation included the following:

(a) An overview of the main components of national communications from non-Annex I Parties, the guidelines used for their preparation and examples of information reported in the mitigation chapters of national communications from some countries of the region;

(b) A summary of the lessons learned and experiences reported in national communications on designing and conducting mitigation assessments and communicating the results;

(c) An overview of decisions adopted by the COP at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions that are relevant to mitigation, namely the decisions on BURs, international consultation and analysis, NAMAs and the NAMA registry.

22. The participants demonstrated interest in further understanding the main elements of the adopted guidelines on BURs and also the funding opportunities available for the first and subsequent rounds of submission of BURs.

23. Representatives of Comoros, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda presented their experiences in conducting mitigation assessments, including information on institutional arrangements put in place to generate the required information; the challenges and barriers encountered, and ways in which they were overcome; lessons learned and the way forward. Some presenters mentioned that the screening exercise has been useful in determining the national appropriateness and emission reduction potential of mitigation actions. The exercise could also contribute to the prioritization of their NAMAs in line with their national development plans. They stressed the need to strengthen national capacities to address emerging issues such as the preparation of BURs, low-emission development strategies, and national measurement, reporting and verification systems. This was followed by a question and answer session during which other participants also presented their national experiences.

C. Mitigation assessment: concepts, structure and steps

24. This session provided an overview on the purpose and objectives of, and a step-by-step guide to, conducting mitigation assessments. It also provided information on translating mitigation assessments into national climate change actions plans, including examples of low-carbon development strategies being developed and implemented in countries in the region. The main steps in conducting the mitigation assessments were outlined as follows:

- (a) Determining and prioritizing the objectives of the assessment and defining its key participants and stakeholders;
- (b) Defining the scope and time frame of the assessment;
- (c) Selecting the assessment methodology in line with national circumstances;
- (d) Collecting and calibrating data and assumptions;
- (e) Developing baseline scenarios;
- (f) Identifying and screening mitigation options;
- (g) Developing and assessing mitigation scenarios.

25. The session also covered a brief overview of the linkage between mitigation assessment, GHG inventories, and vulnerability and adaptation assessment. Participants were provided with a list of resources to use when planning and undertaking mitigation assessments.

D. Mitigation options, issues and barriers by sector

26. This module presented information on the overview of GHG emission sources, trends and drivers by sector and region, cross-sectoral opportunities for emission reduction, technologies and practices that reduce GHG emissions, policies and measures that lead to the adoption and implementation of these technologies and practices, and common barriers and potential solutions. The participants engaged in an exercise by identifying some sector-specific mitigation potentials in their respective countries and possible barriers to realizing those potentials. Participants were also provided with resources to help in identifying, analysing and elaborating mitigation actions in the context of their national communications.

E. Mitigation analysis: methods and tools

27. This module introduced participants to commonly used methods and modelling tools, which can be applied when conducting mitigation assessments and discussed their advantages, limitations, drawbacks, and their data and technical requirements. The participants were introduced to various software and/or tools designed for the purpose of mitigation assessment in the energy sector, including those that have been thoroughly tested and generally found to be credible and, hence, are widely used globally. The participants were also introduced to an overview of the general steps in, and some of the commonly used tools for, conducting mitigation assessments in the non-energy sectors.

F. Reporting mitigation in national communications

28. This module provided participants with an overview of the reporting of mitigation in national communications in accordance with the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties contained in decision 17/CP.8. It also covered some aspects of the guidelines for biennial update reports contained in decision 2/CP.17. The presentation outlined the principal objectives and scope of the guidelines and of the reporting of mitigation-related information in the national communications. In addition, the presentation also touched upon the timing of the submissions of these reports. Lastly, the presentation also provided a few examples of good practices on reporting, including an illustration of the different ways in which to present the results of the GHG inventory, mitigation options and associated marginal abatement cost curves.

G. Building national arrangements for the mitigation assessment

29. The last module presented participants with an example of a documentation toolkit that interested Parties could use to develop and maintain the mitigation assessment processes. The five components of the toolkit are as follows: key sectoral emission analysis; institutional arrangements; mitigation assessment methods and data sources; the mitigation analysis archiving system; and a national plan for further mitigation assessments. The toolkit is intended to reduce the efforts required by future national mitigation assessment teams to put in place arrangements for conducting mitigation assessments and to ensure consistency among and within reports over time.

H. Hands-on exercises

30. The participants engaged in three sessions of an interactive hands-on exercise using a case study to conduct mitigation assessment, as outlined below:

(a) Firstly, participants undertook a simple static screening of mitigation options, which consisted of two basic parts: (i) calculating, using a simple spreadsheet, some of the main quantitative indicators used in a mitigation screening, including the GHG emission reduction potential from each mitigation option and the costs involved; and (ii) examining these results carefully with a qualitative assessment of various screening criteria in order to develop an overall screening matrix;

(b) Secondly, building upon the data and results developed for screening, participants created a simple GHG mitigation scenario using LEAP;

(c) Finally, participants conducted a cost-benefit analysis using LEAP, in which the costs of the various policies and measures employed in the mitigation scenario are quantified and compared with the 'do nothing' baseline scenario.

IV. Feedback and recommendations

31. During the interactive discussion session at the end of the workshop, participants provided feedback on ways in which to enhance the provision of capacity-building support to non-Annex I Parties in the process of, and preparation of, their national communications. Participants were also requested to fill in a short daily feedback form through which information was collected on the areas of the workshop that participants viewed as useful and on their recommendations for improving the training materials, and their views on the content and organization of the hands-on training workshop.

32. Overall, the participants noted that the hands-on training workshop was very useful and that it broadened their understanding of climate change mitigation in the context of the Convention. They found the following to be useful aspects of the workshop:

(a) The comprehensive nature of the workshop, which provided a broad overview of the process of conducting mitigation assessment;

(b) The clear, detailed but distinct, technically sound presentations, communicated in simple, easy to understand language;

(c) The highly interactive nature of the workshop with good interaction between participants and presenters;

(d) The informative country presentations, including good examples of the diverse institutional arrangements that have been put in place, which could be replicated in other countries in the region. The different national perspectives on setting up institutional arrangements for the development of national GHG inventories; and the challenges faced, and approaches used to overcome them, were also found useful;

(e) The hands-on training exercises, particularly the construction of the simple mitigation scenario using LEAP and the introduction to online databases and tools provided a practical understanding of how the models work;

(f) The steps involved in undertaking mitigation assessments and cost-benefit analysis of mitigation options;

(g) The various methods by which Parties can present information and results in their national communications, and the different templates for organizing, collecting and archiving the data used during the national communication process, and possible institutional arrangements during such a process;

(h) The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report, mitigation co-benefits and the potential impact of mitigation actions on gross domestic product (GDP); the impact of GDP on emissions and the addressing of its impacts; and translating mitigation assessments into national climate change plans;

(i) Information on emerging issues such as BURs, NAMAs, the NAMA registry, and the international consultation and analysis process;

(j) Sectoral information on mitigation options, issues, barriers, and opportunities for overcoming them, and looking at mitigation from a cross-sectoral perspective;

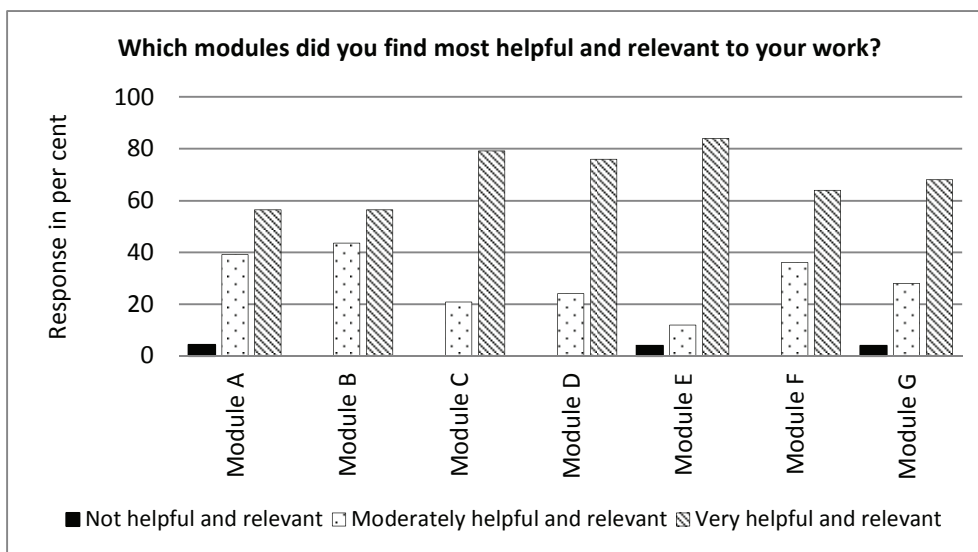
(k) The importance of multi-stakeholder involvement in the process of the preparation of national communications;

(l) Opportunities for South-South cooperation, and the networking and exchange of information and practical experiences among participants.

33. In addition to the daily feedback received from the participants, an online survey was conducted at the end of the workshop to gather general feedback from participants, including those who took part remotely. Thirty-five participants responded to the online survey.

34. The online survey results showed that the majority of participants who participated in the survey found the content of the workshop to be helpful and relevant to their area of work, as shown by the figure below.

Evaluation of the presentations on each module



Note: Module A = mitigating climate change; Module B = mitigation in the context of national communications; Module C = mitigation assessment: concepts, structure and steps; Module D = mitigation options, issues and barriers by sector; Module E = mitigation analysis: methods and tools; Module F = reporting mitigation in national communications; Module G = building national arrangements for the mitigation assessment.

A. Recommendations

35. The participants made the following recommendations to improve the training materials and the structure and content of future hands-on training workshops on mitigation assessment:

- (a) Distribute some of the basic theoretical presentations before the workshop so that more time could be devoted to practical and hands-on training or allocate more time to hands-on exercises and/or have more hands-on group exercises;
- (b) Include more information and discussion on institutional arrangements in the light of the preparation of BURs and the preparation and implementation of NAMAs;
- (c) Include a module on issues associated with access and availability of data and ways to overcome them, as this seems to be a common problem faced by many non-Annex I Parties;
- (d) Provide more cases studies or examples from the region to provide participants with a better understanding of the mitigation policies and programmes being implemented in the region;
- (e) Provide more information and hands-on exercises on non-energy related models and tools, in particular on agriculture and forestry;
- (f) Provide information on various sources of funding available for the implementation of mitigation actions;
- (g) Provide focused training, which addresses specific areas, and invite at least two experts per country to the regional hands-on training workshops;

(h) Translate the training materials into other United Nations languages and other relevant languages of the region;

(i) Supplement the regional hands-on training workshops by establishing a network of experts at the regional level to share experiences and information, and by conducting further training at the national level to allow experts to learn to apply the tools that fit their national circumstances;

(j) Put in place a certification programme for national experts trained through these workshops.

B. Conclusion

36. The participants were appreciative of the training course and thanked the CGE and the secretariat for organizing the workshop and the Government of Ghana for the warm welcome accorded to them and for hosting the workshop and providing excellent facilities. The participants also thanked the Government of the United States of America for providing financial support for the organization of the workshop. Ms. Camacho closed the workshop by thanking the participants, the trainers, the other CGE members and the secretariat for contributing to a successful workshop.
