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**WORKSHOP ON CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS FOR
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION INPUTS TO
THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Views of non-governmental organizations

Note by the secretariat

The Workshop on Consultative Mechanisms for Non-Governmental Organization Inputs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 2 March 1996. At the Workshop, presentations were made by three constituency groups, namely, business and industry; municipal leaders and local authorities; and environmental organizations. These presentations formed the basis of discussion by the working groups of each constituency whose reports are contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/1996/11. In this note, summaries of the original presentations are reproduced without formal editing.*

* For reasons of economy, it is not possible to publish statements that have already been orally presented at a meeting. Those interested in the full texts of the presentations are invited to consult them at the UNFCCC secretariat.

**Principles of business consultation with the bodies established under the
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Mr. Leonard S. Bernstein, on behalf of business groups participating in the Workshop.

Business groups, which include industrial and financial organizations, have been present as accredited observers at all meeting of the process which led to the development and implementation of the framework convention on climate change. However, under existing procedures, their ability to provide information was often limited.

Business NGOs began to discuss their input to the workshop soon after the decision to hold one was reached. Their first meeting on this topic was held in Paris in June. All business organizations which had participated in the UNFCCC process were invited to attend, and efforts were made to invite groups which had not previously participated in the UNFCCC process. Additional meetings were held and there was also an extensive exchange of written information. As a result of these efforts, a set of ten principles have been agreed to.

The first principle is that a business consultative mechanism should provide business with a convenient, direct and effective additional channel of communication.

A second principle is that a business consultative mechanism should further enable business to both volunteer information to, and respond to questions from, all of the bodies established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in a timely manner.

Third, a business consultative mechanism should further enable business to provide information to all of the Parties and to the intergovernmental organizations participating in the UNFCCC process.

Fourth, an industry consultative mechanism should further enable business to provide its views on the full range (policy, socio-economic, technological, etc.) of issues being addressed under the UNFCCC. Much of the discussion on consultative mechanisms has focused on the input business can provide on the technological issues being addressed by the UNFCCC process. Business has much to offer in this area, but our potential contributions are not limited to technological issues. The experience of implementing new enterprises in both developed and developing nations has given business practical expertise in the socio-economic impacts of the introduction of the introduction of new technology. This expertise is directly relevant to the policy initiatives which the UNFCCC process will have to consider.

Business also has experience in dealing with the implications of a broad range of policy options. The consultative mechanism should be broad enough to benefit from the full range of business' experience.

Fifth, a business consultative mechanism should be open to all business NGOs accredited by the UNFCCC process who wish to participate. The broader the range of business groups providing input to the UNFCCC process, the greater the value of that input.

Sixth, a business consultative mechanism should be able to convey the full range of business positions on an unfiltered basis. Business may seek to develop consensus on the issues before the UNFCCC process. However, a consultative mechanism which conveys the diversity of business views will be more valuable to the UNFCCC process than one which demands consensus on all items under discussion.

Seventh, a business consultative mechanism should not be a process for negotiation of commitments from business, or for the selection of technology "winners and losers." The organization set up to facilitate that communication will not be empowered to "represent" business and cannot enter negotiations with the UNFCCC process.

Eighth, a business consultative mechanism should be an addition to, not a replacement for, existing or new business consultation at the national and international level.

Ninth, the business consultative mechanism should be treated by the UNFCCC process in a manner comparable to all other NGO consultative mechanisms, in terms of access and administrative support, including funding for participants from developing nations.

Tenth, and finally, a business consultative mechanism must be subject to and consistent with national and regional anti-trust and competition laws and regulations.

Business consultative mechanism

Mr. Hans Buwalda, on behalf of business groups participating in the Workshop.

The establishment of a Business Consultative Mechanism (BCM) could provide an additional process for communications and advisory consultations between non-governmental business** organizations and Parties to the UNFCCC.

Need for and benefits of a business consultative mechanism

Business groups have followed with great interest and participated as accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the UNFCCC process since its conception, and do so for two principal reasons.

First, business involvement is critical in the selection, development, and implementation of economically sound policies and programs that may be adopted by governments.

Second, business, their employees, shareholders, and customers are significant stakeholders in the choice by Parties of specific policies and programs, and their subsequent impact on economic growth, employment, competitiveness, environmental enhancement, and society's development.

The active role of business is a positive one and an essential element in global economic

** Business includes the industrial and financial communities as well as the full range of business sectors.

development. It is business that will meet the growing needs of consumers worldwide for goods and services.

It is business that develops and disseminates most of the world's technology, including energy efficiency technologies and other technologies that protect the environment. It is business, including the private financial community, that provides most of the capital resources that fund global economic growth. And it is business that recognizes and accepts its responsibilities as environmental stewards and develops, finances, and manages many of the activities that protect and enhance the environment.

The effectiveness of climate change policies of governments, therefore, to a substantial degree, will depend on the knowledge, resources, and skills of industry, recognizing that the impact of those policies ultimately will affect and be paid for by society which comprises business employees, consumers, and stakeholders.

Some Parties to the UNFCCC have expressed an interest in receiving perspective and counsel from business. Business, in turn, have expressed their willingness to expand their participation in the UNFCCC process, to assist Parties in their global climate policy deliberations.

A BCM could be of potentially significant benefit for the Parties to the UNFCCC as it would establish an interface with industry to access a broad range of business knowledge, skills, and expertise from business groups with wide geographic and sectoral representation.

The possible scope of a business consultative mechanism

First, scope involves issues that would be subjects for communication, consultation, and discussion through a BCM. These issues include economics, trade, competitiveness, energy, technology, and environmental impacts.

Second, scope involves the interface between the institutional bodies of the UNFCCC and the BCM. It could also be an additional means of communication between business and industry NGOs and other NGOs accredited to the UNFCCC. Furthermore, the BCM would provide another forum for information exchange and discussion on UNFCCC matters among business and industry groups.

Business groups view a BCM as a potentially important communications vehicle at the international level, giving business a recognized vehicle for input into the UNFCCC, that would supplement, but not replace, other existing and future means of communication between governments and the business community, individually and collectively, at both the international and national levels.

Structure and membership of a business consultative mechanism

All business NGOs that are accredited to the COP/UNFCCC would be invited to participate. The BCM would not be part of the formal structure of the SBSTA of COP,

but it would be able to provide input to and consult with the entire UNFCCC process, the Parties, and the organizational bodies of the UNFCCC.

The structure, activities, and internal processes of the BCM would be determined by the business NGOs participating in it. The activities of the BCM would be subject to and consistent with applicable national and regional anti-trust and competition laws and regulations.

Business, at both the national and international levels, has experience with consultation and advisory committees and mechanisms (e.g., OECD/Business and Industry Advisory Committee, IEA/Coal Industry Advisory Board and Oil Industry Advisory Board).

However, UNFCCC deliberations on climate change are much broader, more complex, and more far-reaching than has been the case with any other international convention. Since all economies and societies can be affected by global climate policy initiatives taken by Parties to the UNFCCC, all members of the international business community will have a stake in those actions. No other current industry consultative model seems to offer the prospect for fulfilling the needs of either governments or industry. The creation of a new and additional channel of communication is, therefore, appropriate.

Workplan of a business consultative mechanism

The workplan of the BCM would be determined largely by issues under consideration in the UNFCCC process. Business NGOs could, however, initiate and introduce for discussion with the UNFCCC issues which, in the view of business, should be considered, and about which we have information, expertise, or perspective. Responses to such issues would be developed by the business participants in the BCM recognizing that on many issues there may be a range and diversity of views.

Business and industry areas of competence would include, but certainly would not be limited to, analysis and assessment of specific policy options, including those being considered by the AGBM. Other areas would include the following: Analysis and assessment modalities; Investment flows and perspectives; Production and commercialization of products and services; Technology research development, dissemination, and cooperation, as well as barriers thereto; Fiscal incentives and dis-incentives; Technological and operational systems management; Voluntary approaches; and Joint implementation and activities implemented jointly.

The challenge and opportunity of a business consultative mechanism

The challenge of managing the issue of climate change over the long-term will require the patience and cooperation of governments and their business and industry constituents. A Business Consultative Mechanism at the international level can assist in this effort. Business is willing to work with the COP and its subsidiary bodies to develop a constructive, responsive, and responsible process of consultation. Business welcomes the opportunity to participate more fully in the UNFCCC process.

Business and industry participation in technical and economic assessment
Mr. Mike Harris, on behalf of business groups participating in the Workshop.

Business and industry NGOs believe that an effective technical and economic assessment process could enhance the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Such a process could assist the Parties in arriving at a workable, environmentally beneficial and cost-effective approach change. Business respectfully encourages the Parties to establish the principle of business and industry participation in any technical and economic assessment process to serve the Convention Bodies.

Business and industry can provide expertise on issues related to the development, commercialization, and the dissemination of technologies and economic information.

It is important to establish the principles of technical and economic assessment input prior to considering how such inputs should be provided. A number of key principles which would encourage industry and business participation in identified work programs include:

- Participation of experts, both technical and business, through an open-ended and transparent selection process, from a wide range of business and industry organizations, with relevant technical and economic expertise and business experience.
- Focus on existing and evolving, longer-term technological approaches to mitigation of, and adaptation to potential global climate changes.
- Recognition that economic sectors do not generally perform independently of one another.
- A process that produces objectives, unbiased, timely, and peer-reviewed information, which would be available to all Convention bodies.
- The development of information on options that should be considered as well as information relating to implementation of those options, including: costs, effects, trade-offs, barriers, technical requirements, timing factors, capital requirements, market feasibility, commercial viability, intellectual property rights, environmental worker and consumer safety and health consideration, trade, desirability and other relevant factors.
- Information which would be analytical and descriptive, rather than prescriptive.

It is important to establish a sound basis for technical and economic inputs, which is vital for the evaluation of technological options. Such inputs from business and industry should be flexible and have a longer-term perspective. The process would also present an opportunity for engaging the knowledge and cooperation of industry worldwide in achieving the objectives of the Convention, enabling Parties to meet their commitments in a cost-effective manner.

Involvement of business and industry experts provides reasonable assurance that practical technical and economic information will be available for the long-term.

Business are most appreciative of the opportunity to provide these views on the development of an effective process for business and industry input concerning technical and economic assessment of potentially beneficial technologies.

**Local governments as strategic partners in addressing
climate change and its effects**

Ms. Barbara Hall, Mayor, City of Toronto, Canada

Ms. Hall, after introducing her delegation, outlined that local governments in both northern and southern countries are now coping with the weather, health, and economic effects of climate change.

Local governments are working to both adapt to climate change and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. They believe they can be effective strategic partners with their national governments, the COP, and its subsidiary bodies in addressing climate change.

Using Toronto, as an example, Ms. Hall showed that in 1989, their council made a commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% from 1988 levels by the year 2005. Over the last six years, Toronto has worked hard to meet this commitment.

The lessons local governments are learning have less to do with technology and more to do with institutional cooperation and innovative financing. They are learning that energy efficiency investments on a large scale are doable, fundable, and instrumental in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. They not only save money for everyone, but they create jobs locally and can be largely financed by the private sector.

Local governments would welcome the provision of a more permanent role and voice at the COP because their collaborative efforts with national governments are now producing a valuable body of knowledge, experience, and insights that will facilitate the ability of national governments under the United Nations Framework Convention.

Another important reason for local governments to become strategic partners with the COP is that there is wealth of political, technical, scientific expertise among our officials. At the local level, many of the changes that are needed to meet national greenhouse gas reduction commitments lie in the realm of changing personal lifestyles. Ms. Hall submitted that local governments are the experts in this area.

Local governments are committed, organized, and ready to participate as full partners in addressing climate change with national governments and international agencies. They have valuable insights and experience to share, and results to report.

Their practical experience to date says that combating global warming offers multiple benefits to the local economy and environment. Reducing energy use pumps investment into new jobs, saves money, creates livable neighborhoods, and improves local air quality. Plenty of private financing is available.

She added that it is time for the voice of local governments to be heard, and that local governments are ready to be strategic partners.

Proposal for local governments consultation with the subsidiary bodies

Mr. Ariel Ulloa Azocar, Mayor, City of Concepción, Chile

Developing country cities are becoming more conscious of the potential effects of climate change on urban populations.

Mr. Azocar made several suggestions regarding the role that local governments, working through their designated associations such as the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), could play in advising the subsidiary body on scientific and technical matters.

First, local governments should be regarded as a distinct sector for purposes of consultation with the subsidiary bodies. UN General Assembly Rule #62 now provides for distinct "local government organization" or "LGO" status. LGOs would welcome the application of this rule to the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

Secondly, LGOs would welcome a consultation process with the subsidiary bodies that is separate from the Technical Advisory Panels. LGOs can report actual greenhouse gas emissions reductions that they have achieved to their national governments. Case studies of successful LGO programs and initiatives can provide valuable information to the subsidiary bodies on methods and technologies that are working locally. Strategic financing of LGO infrastructure is crucial to undertaking investments that solve local environmental problems while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, the range of potential effects of climate change on urban populations is barely understood, so we propose a partnership between LGOs and the subsidiary bodies to better address this scientific issue.

Thirdly, present COP quantification and reporting methodologies do not encourage LGOs to report their results to national governments. Local governments recommend, therefore, that the COP encourage national governments to designate local governments as official reporting units and to work with ICLEI to define a common methodology that includes LGO input.

Finally, they recommend that the LGOs and the subsidiary bodies work together to develop and find financing for a comprehensive database that provides an interactive facility on the Internet for technical and scientific advice from LGOs. Such a facility would enable LGOs to provide useful input to the subsidiary bodies without the expense of so many meetings.

In conclusion, LGOs are ready and willing to consult with the subsidiary bodies. They look forward to finding middle ground with environmental NGOs and industries in this session to design a useful, cost effective, and fully representative consultation process.

**Proposal for local government consultation with
the Conference of the Parties (COP)**
Mr. Christopher Iga, Mayor, Kampala, Uganda

In the developing world, people are becoming increasingly aware that the effects of climate change may be very harmful to cities.

Local governments should become full strategic partners with the COP in addressing climate change and its effects.

In respect of the ECOSOC guidelines, the local government delegation proposes that the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and its environmental wing, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), be permitted to participate in the deliberations of all public meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

Furthermore, in recognition of the unique contribution that the local government sector can make to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, they urged the COP to consider and to apply the rules established by the General Assembly in 1995 for local government participation in the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements. This distinct, "Local Government Organization" or "LGO" status is provided in General Assembly Rule 62.

The delegation submitted that IULA and ICLEI are appropriate organizations to express the views of local governments in the COP. Together IULA and ICLEI represent local governments and their national associations in most countries and every region of the world. Because they are democratically governed by their local government members, they can express views representing such governments and urban people living throughout the world.

ICLEI and its network possesses a special area of competence relevant to the COP and its subsidiary bodies. Through its cities for climate protection campaign, it has engaged 130 local governments throughout the world, whose jurisdictions account for 5% of the total global CO₂ emissions, in climate abatement and adaptation strategies.

Local governments can offer a strategic helping hand in implementing the provisions of the Climate Convention through their national governments and in cooperation with each other internationally. It is through such a strategic partnership with the COP that together they will be able to more effectively implement new technologies on a worldwide basis, disseminate institutional and financial methodologies, and best educate the public on climate change in the world's urban areas.

National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

Mr. David Johnson, Commissioner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, U.S.A., on behalf of the United States' National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

NARUC is a voluntary association of state utility regulators representing the 250 million citizens of all 50 of the United States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Its objectives include discussion of subjects concerning the operation and supervision of public utilities and carriers, and the promotion of coordinated action to protect the common interests of the people.

Mr. Johnson said that state regulatory bodies continue to be in the difficult position of being informally recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization when, in fact, members are duly elected or appointed representatives of state governments across the United States and territories. While they appreciate the United Nations' position, state regulators are "Governments" in every sense of the term, and it is their hope that the secretariat and national delegations will recognize NARUC's unique status and find a way to enhance their participation in international negotiations.

The make-up of any advisory panels to SBSTA should be constructed so as to provide the full range of expertise relevant to the complex issues surrounding Climate Change. As state utility regulators, the members of their organization are charged with balancing the cost vs. the benefits of decisions regarding fuel choices, capital investments and the utilities' impacts on the environment. Their Commissioners determine and approve a return on utility investment which must balance ratepayer desires for low rate, shareholder expectations and environmental responsibility. A central theme of Commission investigations is the evaluation of the appropriateness and cost effectiveness of electric generating and environmental mitigation technology options.

NARUC's expertise and experience in evaluating the economics and technology options of electric generation provides a unique contribution to the input needed for the implementation of the Convention. Their association is more than willing to work with SBSTA in an advisory capacity when called upon. Any advisory panels to SBSTA, with the appropriate make-up, could constitute an adequate mechanism to garner the specialized contributors of Non-Governmental Organizations.

NARUC has some concern that, in the absence of an opportunity to contribute to any form of advisory panel mechanism input to SBSTA, there be a mechanism to allow NARUC to further interact with the delegates to the Convention. It is NARUC's proposal to continue the Berlin Mandate's foresight in establishing a forum for NGO participation. Just as COP-1 recognized the need for further input by creating the subsidiary bodies, so SBSTA should recognize the on-going benefits of a wide range of consultations. They feel that their members' interests would be well served if the workshop mechanism were included in each deliberative session of SBSTA.

NARUC reiterates its desire and intention to continue to participate in negotiations regarding the mitigation of anthropogenic greenhouse gases, adaptation policies and other global climate change measures. An alternative to the advisory panel venue would be the establishment of a permanent workshop consultative mechanism.

Value of NGO Participation in the Climate Change Convention

Mr. Ravi Sharma, on behalf of Climate Action Network

The first principle to any mechanism of NGO input into the Climate Change Convention must be that it ensures NGO input in support of the ultimate objective of the treaty, namely to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

Environmental NGOs are the organizations which globally build public confidence in the treaty. They are the ones informing citizens directly on the meaning and the importance of the treaty, building the public support crucial to achieve the political will. Political will is important to implement the measures necessary to achieve the aim of the treaty.

NGOs play a path-breaking role by practically demonstrating the technical and economical viability of projects in reducing GHGs.

Some examples of environmental NGOs successes in supporting the Convention are: building public awareness and channeling funds leading to common concern; analyzing issues and highlighting possible solutions (Commitment for Change leads to solutions like PAM, QELROs); monitoring and evaluation of policies (ECO, country reports, energy efficiency, green rating); encouraging debate in the developing countries by spreading awareness about stakes and by assisting them with information and advice; and undertaking fire-fighting operations by opposing projects which increase GHG emissions

So as to be able to carry out these vital functions, Environmental NGOs need flexible mechanisms to support the treaty, in line with Agenda 21, which clearly demands NGO input and access. This already works informally in a beneficial way in other conventions such as desertification, wetlands and hazardous wastes where NGO input is highly valued and supported yet not necessarily institutionalized through a formal mechanism.

The Climate Change Convention should also support the same pattern of participatory process. A stable funding process is needed to ensure their participation so that they can fulfill the tasks in this fora.

Mechanisms should reflect the diversity of NGO views, in support of delegations divergent needs and capacities.

**Building a treaty responsive to emerging science and political will:
Mechanisms for flexibility in NGO input**

Mr. William Hare, on behalf of Climate Action Network

Mechanisms for NGO involvement in the Convention process should be judged by whether or not they assist in building the agreements needed to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. NGO efforts help to build the political will at both national and international levels to take action.

Unless there is sufficient political will expressed by governments however, NGO involvement in the Convention process will not produce real benefits and will be limited in real effect to apportioning the blame for failure. Strengthening the Convention is thus a pre-requisite for successful expansion and enhancement of NGO inputs into it.

Principles

Mechanisms for inputs must be open and available to all stakeholders, including local governments, and the environmental and business communities. It is also essential that adequate funding be provided to facilitate the participation of representatives of all categories of stakeholders from developing countries. The diversity of NGOs needs to be acknowledged.

Six proposals

There are a large number of different ways in which NGO involvement in the Convention need to be enhanced. Time permits only six examples to be illustrated.

National communications

Providing a mechanism for NGOs to evaluate and attach our views to the reviews of national communications. NGOs would like, for example, to evaluate whether or not their governments are indeed achieving the reductions they are saying they will achieve, and NGOs would like to support additional means to "close the gap" if their governments are falling short. NGOs do this already informally through their CAN national communication reviews. What we are asking for now is the opportunity for a formal mechanism through which these reviews could be communicated to the Convention, with Parties having the opportunity to respond.

Demonstration projects

Enable NGOs to implement demonstration projects at the national level that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Change Convention and the GEF Council could expand the program for NGO funds now limited to US\$50,000 to an open system in which NGOs, national institutions, etc. could apply for funds.

Information dissemination

NGOs can help implement the commitments in the Convention to public education on the threat of climate change and the possible solutions. The operation of information programs such as the Information Unit on Climate Change could be significantly enhanced by opening up its operation to NGOs. CAN would also support the secretariat itself in organizing events at the national level publicizing the Convention.

Formal inputs to agenda items

In the negotiating bodies of the Convention it should be standard practice for the secretariat to solicit views of NGOs on specific agenda items. These inputs could be compiled in a separate section of Miscellaneous documents, perhaps following the submissions from governments. There is no reason why this practice cannot be replicated and expanded in other Convention bodies, particularly, but not limited to, the AGBM.

Access and intervention

NGOs should be given much freer license to intervene from the floor. Much more constructive dialogue is possible if NGOs are given greater leeway to intervene whenever called upon by the Chair under individual agenda items. This is the practice within, for example, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Montreal Protocol and IPCC plenaries.

Moving forward from the Rio process means expanding the formal and informal roles of NGOs, yet the Convention is heading in the opposite direction.

Structural issues

Finally, ensuring that the Convention and its future protocol or protocols are effective involves building in flexibility and dynamism. Without the capacity for dynamism, NGO input mechanisms will be virtually irrelevant.

There are a number of ways such flexibility can be developed. The German proposal for annexes to the protocol which would contain lists of policies and measures is modeled on this approach.

A key example is the adjustment procedure of the Montreal Protocol. The Meeting of the Parties can, by a specially qualified majority vote, advance the phase out schedule for ozone depleting substances that are already subject to control under the Protocol. The protocol being negotiated by the AGBM should develop its own “ratchet” mechanism to adjust the reduction targets and timetables, to set sector or gas specific targets, etc.

Conclusion

Greater flexibility might be introduced into the Climate Change Convention. Information and creativity from the NGO community will be an essential component of successful negotiation of the next stage of the Convention as well as the monitoring and

verification of its commitments.

However, NGO information and ideas will be useless if they fall on deaf ears. In this context the first big test of the Convention's institutions will be how effectively they respond to the latest findings contained in the IPCC Second Assessment Report.

The second test will be the outcome of the AGBM process in 1997 - will the AGBM develop the kind of flexible protocol, containing legally binding targets and timetables for emissions reductions, that will set us on a path towards meeting the ultimate objective of the Convention?

Enhancing NGO involvement and developing new mechanisms for this can help achieve these objectives.

Enhancing effective NGO participation in the assessment of climate technologies

Ms. Annie Petsonk, on behalf of Climate Action Network

The success of any mechanism for assessing climate technologies is the effectiveness of that process in furthering the objective of the UNFCCC as stated in Article 2 of the Convention. NGOs can help infuse confidence in the technology assessment process; the process can then in turn build further confidence in societal capabilities for adopting the steps necessary to meet science-based greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives. Successful technology assessment engages "problem solvers" from around the world in evaluating the technical feasibility of greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Since many ideas and much expertise and experience in particular climate-sustainable technologies exist outside of government, non-governmental participation can enhance the effectiveness of technology assessment, helping ensure that technology assessment serves the objectives of the Convention. It is vital that governments draw on this expertise in assessing technologies for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The input of environmental NGOs is particularly important since it is generally not subject to the real or potential conflicts of interest that purveyors of particular technologies possess. NGOs are thus able to offer fresh perspectives and creative approaches that, for various reasons structural to particular markets and regulatory regimes, are not adequately reflected in the private, for-profit sector. The experience and expertise of local communities and local authorities is also critical.

Whatever specific approach is developed for undertaking climate technology assessment, the following principles are essential.

Program of the work

The work program should undertake a two-fold approach: (1) the initial program should focus on short-term technology assessment priorities in specific substantive areas, aimed at answering geographically specific questions about the technologies to achieve scientifically-driven reduction objectives, and focusing on technologies that may be more generally replicable; and (2) a second phase should take a long-term view with regard to the establishment of other technology assessment priorities as short-term questions are answered.

Content of the work

The process should emphasize the assessment of specific innovative technologies and processes for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A necessary element of that assessment will be methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of the technologies and processes in reducing emissions. A subsequent component could be the assessment of adaptation technologies and processes; similarly, a necessary element would be methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of those adaptation technologies and processes.

Duration

The results of the initial assessment work should be examined in two years, and the effectiveness of the process reviewed at that time. The process may be renewed if it is serving the objective of the Convention.

Principles of effective technology assessment

The following principles underlie effective technology assessment. These are: participation of experts based on actual technical expertise and experience; independence of the experts; disclosure of conflicts of interest; developing country expertise and experience; expertise on alternatives, including operational/process alternatives; equal footing; performance-based evaluation; review by peers; and unfiltered work product.

Experience shows that where these principles are followed, they can be effective in providing a level playing field that encourages the development and diffusion of sustainable technologies and processes to achieve science-based environmental goals. Failure to premise the process of technology assessment on these principles risks politization of the technology process and consequent "picking winners and losers" on the basis of political concerns.