

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE
Thirteenth session
Lyon, 11-15 September 2000
Agenda item 9 (d)

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

OTHER MATTERS

Report on the UNFCCC/IPCC expert meeting on vulnerability and adaptation methodologies, Lisbon, 10 August 2000

A. Mandate

1. At its twelfth session, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) encouraged the secretariat to continue its work on collecting and disseminating information on the methods and tools to assess climate change impacts and adaptation. It noted that further action is needed to improve the quality of information, and to enhance the capability of developing country Parties to make the best use of available methods and tools.

2. The SBSTA requested the secretariat, in coordination with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to organize a meeting of experts to explore:

(a) Options to improve the compilation and review and dissemination of information on methodologies, including the development of an extended compendium of methods and tools;

(b) The feasibility of a joint workshop on impacts and adaptation methodologies after the Working Group II Third Assessment Report of the IPCC is approved/accepted. It invited the secretariat to provide information on the results of the expert meeting at its thirteenth session (FCCC/SBSTA/2000/5, para. 43).

B. Scope of the meeting

3. In response to the above mandate, a meeting was held in conjunction with the IPCC Working Group II (WGII) Lead Authors Meeting in Lisbon on 10 August 2000. Thirteen experts and five representatives of the IPCC secretariat and WG II technical support unit took part in the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was twofold:

(a) to discuss the feasibility of a joint UNFCCC/IPCC workshop on impacts and adaptation after acceptance of the WGII report, and

(b) to provide advice on improving UNFCCC efforts to compile, review and disseminate methods for assessment of impacts and adaptation.

4. Mr. T. Downing (United Kingdom) agreed to serve as chairperson for the meeting. The secretariat made an introductory presentation on the mandate and background information. Four main issues relevant to the mandate were identified for consideration at the meeting as follows:

(a) Would it be feasible and useful to conduct a workshop in cooperation with IPCC on this matter, and if so what would be the scope and focus of the workshop?

(b) How could the exchange of information be enhanced and the quality of information in the UNFCCC methodological database be improved?

(c) What procedure could be used to review the methods?

(d) What are the main issues related to capacity-building in this area?

C. Summary of the discussion

Workshop on methodologies in cooperation with IPCC

5. The participants in the meeting supported the idea of a meeting with the participation of IPCC experts, but only after the release of the IPCC Third Assessment Report (TAR), in April 2001. In addition to the technical experts, the user community should also be included, particularly the representatives of technical teams from developing countries responsible for vulnerability and adaptation assessment in national communications. The workshop would explore:

(a) The experience of developing countries in applying current methods and their emerging needs;

(b) The current state of the art of adaptation and information/methods identified in the IPCC report and how this applies to specific circumstances of developing countries;

(c) Options for improving the quality and dissemination of information on adaptation methods.

Options to enhance the exchange of information and improve its quality

6. The meeting participants suggested that, in order to enhance the exchange of information and improve its quality, it would be useful to:

(a) Clearly define the scope, context and focus of the methodological work, including:

(i) the purpose and specific objectives of the work;

(ii) tasks which the methodologies are to address (e.g. research or policy questions);

- (iii) the users of the methodologies (e.g. technical teams, policy makers, negotiators). The methodological activities should be country-driven. Information in the initial national communications of non-Annex I Parties, compiled by the secretariat, and from technical experts and the representatives of the Parties to the Convention might be used in this regard;
- (b) Focus on adaptation methods, including both sectoral methods and methods to assess broad adaptation strategies and adaptive capacity;
- (c) Develop a process to evaluate the methods listed in the UNFCCC database, reflecting the value of the methods for particular purposes (e.g. some methods could be useful at a broad policy level of debate, and others for specific project evaluation);
- (d) Exchange experience on the use of the methods, highlighting the benefits and difficulties encountered and how they were dealt with; and
- (e) Ensure that the UNFCCC work takes into consideration other activities of related United Nations agencies and other international organizations. Specific suggestions in this regard included: (a) coordinating the UNFCCC effort with the further development of the United Nations Environment Programme *Handbook on Methods for Climate Change impact Assessment and Adaptation Strategies*, and (b) taking into account the information contained in the IPCC Guidance Paper on Cross-Cutting Issues to the TAR in future work on methodologies.

Procedure to review the methods

7. The participants in the meeting suggested that the review process should:
- (a) Aim to improve the comparability and validity of the methodologies. The purpose of the review process and criteria for evaluating methods would need to be clearly defined;
 - (b) It could include a peer review of methodologies, feedback from both the authors and the users of the methods, identifying problems and considering possible solutions and providing examples of how methods were applied. It could be implemented using the web to enhance communications;
 - (c) Involve experts from the UNFCCC and the IPCC.

Capacity building

8. The participants recognized that capacity to use impact assessment and adaptation methodologies has to be built in developing countries. They noted that to be most efficient the capacity-building effort should ensure that:
- (a) Tools and methods are appropriate for the particular country, sector or region and address their priorities. It was pointed out in this regard that complex methods and tools

for the assessment of technologies for adaptation are not a first priority for many developing countries, whereas the framework for assessing adaptation and adaptive capacity aimed at reducing vulnerability would be extremely useful;

(b) It is focused on relevant institutions and qualified experts working on climate change issues in a country.

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