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MATTERS RELATING TO THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Progress report of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

Note by the secretariat^{*}

Summary

This document reports on operational and substantive issues relating to the work of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) during the biennium 2002–2003. The document also reports on the four regional workshops in 2003 requested by decision 8/CP.8, and provides an overview of how the LEG has implemented its programme of work as mandated by decision 29/CP.7.

^{*} Due to the postponement of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group regional workshops on national adaptation programmes of action (NAPA) preparation, the submission of this document was delayed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 29/CP.7, established the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to advise on the preparation and implementation strategy for national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), and adopted the terms of reference of the LEG. According to these terms of reference, the LEG was to convene twice each year, and report on its work to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its sixteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth sessions.

B. Scope of the note

2. This document summarizes the work of the LEG during its current two-year term, and reports on its four meetings in 2002 and 2003 (see paragraph 3 below), and on intersessional work.

II. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania hosted the first meeting of the LEG, at Arusha, from 26 to 28 February 2002. The second meeting was held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 20 June 2002. The Government of Samoa hosted the third meeting, in Apia, from 3 to 5 March 2003. And the fourth meeting was hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan in Thimphu on 8, 12 and 13 September 2003. The Governments of Canada and the Netherlands provided financial support for the organization of the four LEG meetings during the biennium 2002–2003.

4. At its first meeting, in Arusha, and pursuant to paragraph 5 of its terms of reference, the group elected Mr. Bubu Jallow (Gambia) as its Chair, Mr. Mizanur R. Khan (Bangladesh) as Vice-Chair, Ms. Isabelle Niang Diop (Senegal) as Francophone rapporteur, and Mr. Mohamed Ali (Maldives) as Anglophone rapporteur. At its third meeting, in Samoa, the group elected Mr. Laavasa Malua (Samoa) as Chair, Mr. Paul Desanker (Malawi) as Vice-Chair, Ms. Madeleine Diouf (Senegal)¹ as Francophone rapporteur, and Mr. Lubinda Aongola (Zambia) as Anglophone rapporteur.

5. In accordance with paragraph 11 of the terms of reference of the LEG, the secretariat supported the implementation of LEG activities and facilitated the preparation of the group's reports for consideration by the SBI.

6. In support of the effective dissemination of relevant information to least developed country (LDC) Parties, including on the activities of the LEG, the secretariat operationalized its low-bandwidth LDC page, which can be accessed at <<http://unfccc.int>> and which includes a section addressing LEG issues. The secretariat also created an email address (leghelp@unfccc.int) to which LDC Parties can send requests to the LEG for assistance, and a LEG list server to facilitate communication among the LEG members.

III. LEG CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NAPA PREPARATION PROCESS

7. The main objective of the LEG is to advise on the preparation and implementation strategy for NAPAs. The LEG has delivered a variety of products to this end, such as the annotated guidelines for the preparation of NAPAs (which include appendices on synergy among multilateral environmental agreements, on mainstreaming NAPAs into national development planning, and on the process of prioritization of NAPA projects).

¹ Elected at the fourth meeting of the LEG.

8. In its efforts to gain first-hand experience in following the guidelines for the preparation of NAPAs and in identifying problems in their interpretation, the group took an initiative to synthesize available information for two simulated NAPAs, one for a land-locked LDC and another for a coastal LDC. This work helped the LEG to provide informed targeted advice from a user perspective, and enabled it to develop effective annotations to the NAPA guidelines, bearing in mind the differing types and quality of available data.

9. In response to a request from the COP, the LEG provided input to the process of reviewing the NAPA guidelines at COP 8. The advice from the LEG, which was adopted at COP 8, was against amending the guidelines at that early stage and for accepting the LEG annotations as a sufficient intermediate step towards further consideration at SBI 19 for a revision of the guidelines at COP 9.

10. In limiting the LEG mandate to a period of two years, the COP had envisioned that by COP 9 there would be completed NAPAs, as well as Parties which had started implementing these NAPAs. So far no LDCs have moved beyond the initial stages of NAPA preparation. Consequently it is the view of the LEG that the current NAPA guidelines (decision 28/CP.7) should be retained without revision but that the LEG annotated guidelines could be revised to accommodate the needs and difficulties expressed by LDC Parties in the use of the guidelines so far.

11. Pursuant to decision 8/CP.8, the LEG prepared a submission on strategies for implementing NAPAs and ways and means to address the various elements of the LDC work programme.² The group noted that the LEG work programme includes activities other than NAPAs, that the LDC Fund would not be the only source of support for NAPAs, and that criteria were needed to address eligibility and prioritization of projects to be supported from the LDC Fund. To this end the group commissioned a paper on such criteria. The results of this effort are addressed in chapter VII below.

12. In response to decision 7/CP.8, the LEG also formulated a submission on activities, programmes and measures to be funded by the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) in relation to the LEG mandate. The group's submission emphasized that this fund should allow for support for NAPA activities (e.g. those relating to capacity-building for adaptation), which should be considered as among the earliest areas for support from both the SCCF and the LDC Fund, given that activities proposed through NAPAs follow a rigorous assessment and evaluation process in accordance with paragraph 2 of decision 5/CP.7.

13. The LEG organized a global workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with the objective of building capacity among different stakeholders in LDCs for NAPA preparation. In addition, consistent with decision 8/CP.8, the LEG organized four regional workshops during 2003. The regional workshops were funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the LDC Fund; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) served as implementing agency and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) as executing agency. Chapter IV below provides an overview of these workshops.

IV. LEG WORKSHOPS IN SUPPORT OF NAPA PREPARATION

14. In order to provide effective and credible support to the NAPA preparation process, the LEG established successful partnerships with implementing and executing agencies involved in this process, as well as with regional experts and national stakeholders from environment, development and finance ministries and from local communities. This was a major factor in ensuring the success of the LEG workshops on building capacity for NAPA preparation.

² Document FCCC/SBI/2003/INF.6.

15. The LEG organized a global workshop on capacity-building for NAPA preparation from 18 to 21 September 2002 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Financial support was provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID), the Government of France (Foreign Ministry), and UNITAR through a project funded by the GEF. UNDP provided logistical support.
16. The 135 participants at the workshop included potential members of national NAPA teams from environment, planning and finance ministries and civil society in LDC Parties. The workshop, which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, served as a launching pad for the NAPA preparation process, and established a common base of knowledge for all LDC Parties from which to embark on the preparation of their NAPAs.
17. The first LEG regional workshop on NAPA preparation was organized in Apia, Samoa, from 6 to 8 March 2003, and was inaugurated by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa. This workshop brought together 40 participants, including stakeholder representatives from LDC Small Island States in the Pacific region (including UNFCCC national focal points, representatives from other government sectors such as ministries of economy and planning, and representatives from civil society), as well as representatives from United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and several funding agencies, including the GEF.
18. H.E. Mr. Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, inaugurated the second LEG regional workshop on NAPAs, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 25 to 27 June 2003, with 53 participants including stakeholder representatives from African Anglophone LDCs. The workshop raised awareness of adaptation and its link to poverty reduction and sustainable development, and contributed to developing national capacity for the preparation of NAPAs in participating countries.
19. The third LEG regional workshop on NAPA preparation was hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan in Thimphu from 9 to 11 September 2003. Nine Asian LDCs were represented with 64 participants attending the meeting. The workshop focused on providing participants with an understanding of the objectives, characteristics and content of the NAPA process and its development.
20. The fourth LEG regional workshop on capacity-building for NAPA preparation was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 28 to 31 October 2003. The meeting was inaugurated by the Minister of Environment of Burkina Faso. This workshop brought together 95 participants, mainly from 22 African and Caribbean Francophone LDCs. This last regional workshop of the series drew upon much of the useful experience and material from the previous workshops. The training sessions focused on specific situations of vulnerability common to the region. The thematic focus included humid areas, drought and floods, storms, river development, hydro-electricity, dry areas, including pastoral economies, desertification, agriculture, food security and rural livelihoods, and small islands and coastal zones.
21. All of the LEG workshops for NAPA preparation included country case studies to serve as input to the exercises which were designed to provide practical first-hand experience in the preparation of NAPAs.
22. Through surveys distributed at the workshops, many LDC stakeholder representatives expressed the need for longer-term support for both the preparation and implementation phases of the NAPA process, particularly to help in some of the more complex methodological aspects such as rapid assessment, ranking and prioritization of NAPA projects, and development of project profiles.

V. LEG CONTRIBUTION ON SYNERGY

23. The terms of reference of the LEG included a provision on facilitating the exchange of information and on promoting regional synergy, and synergy with other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), in the preparation and implementation strategy of NAPAs.

24. As a first step, the LEG prepared a paper on synergy with other MEAs. This is included as an appendix to the LEG annotations to the NAPA guidelines, which have been disseminated in English and French to LDC Parties.

25. The LEG regional workshops on capacity-building for NAPA preparation are themselves examples of how the LEG was able to capitalize on regional synergy, based on the similar situations and vulnerabilities exhibited by the countries participating in each of these workshops.

26. The LEG sought to solicit views, through the LEG regional workshops, on the promotion of regional synergy. These views include the following:

(a) That cross-border issues in the context of NAPAs should be addressed in a centralized manner, possibly through a collective review of NAPA proposals (for the preparation phase) and subsequently completed NAPAs (for the implementation phase), to investigate the potential for synergy;

(b) That the concept of regional synergy should not be addressed in the strict sense of geographical contiguity because, for example, island LDCs in one part of the world may have opportunities to capitalize on regional synergy with others in another part;

(c) That guidance is needed on how to best enable regional synergy with non-LDC neighbouring countries, particularly in the NAPA implementation phase;

(d) That concrete arrangements are needed for sharing experience among LDCs, particularly those who share similar situations and vulnerabilities, including through workshops and regional information networks, to enhance access to relevant data and information.

VI. ADVICE ON CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS

27. The terms of reference of the LEG mandated the LEG 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 GEF and other relevant capacity-building initiatives.

28. The LEG itself, through its global workshop in Bangladesh and the four subsequent regional workshops, sought to actively build the capacity of a variety of stakeholders in the national NAPA teams, including those from environment, finance and development ministries and those representing local communities.

29. At the same time, the LEG received input from workshop participants on what further capacity is needed in the context of the preparation of NAPAs. The following are the main needs relating to capacity-building that were raised:

(a) Capacity-building (including hands-on training through dedicated workshops for NAPA technical teams) should be provided on ranking/prioritization tools and on the "logframe method";

(b) Institutional capacity-building is needed, including for national focal points, especially for the implementation phase of NAPAs;

(c) Data accessibility, collection, assessment and management should be improved, particularly in relation to meteorological information;

(d) Capacity-building is needed to ensure the effectiveness of the participatory/consultative process, including for the facilitation of multidisciplinary teams;

(e) Some LDCs should be given particular attention in meeting their capacity-building needs, such as those countries that have only recently become Parties or those facing unique socio-economic or political difficulties that render them in need of special support;

(f) Information from National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSAs) may be very useful in assessing capacity-building needs for the promotion of synergy, although this information may not directly address the focus of NAPAs on urgent and immediate adaptation needs;

(g) Funding for capacity-building needs can be provided by the LDC Fund, and other appropriate sources.

VII. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITIZATION OF NAPA PROJECTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

30. When preparing its submission on strategies for implementing NAPAs and ways and means to address the various elements of the LDC work programme, the LEG recognized a need to identify procedures for establishing eligibility and prioritization of proposed projects in the context of support provided by the GEF for this purpose.

31. In this context the group commissioned a paper through the secretariat on criteria to address eligibility and prioritization of NAPA projects to be supported in the NAPA implementation phase.³ The LEG then identified a number of key questions, which are seen as key to providing advice to LDCs on the preparation and implementation of NAPAs and to supporting the SBI and COP discussions on adaptation funding under the Convention. These questions are reproduced in annex I to this document.

VIII. AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

32. From the experience gained throughout its current two-year mandate, the LEG identified the following areas for further work, for consideration in the context of the NAPA process:

(a) A revision of the LEG annotations is needed in order to accommodate the needs and difficulties expressed by LDC Parties in the use of the guidelines thus far;

(b) Regional cooperation is an important component for success in the implementation phase of NAPAs. During its mandate, the LEG addressed regional synergy in combination with synergy among multilateral environmental agreements. Once a representative sample of NAPAs has been prepared by LDC Parties, discrete proposals can be made to promote such synergy;

(c) More work is needed on syntheses of available knowledge, on prioritization and ranking of adaptation activities and projects, on determination of urgency and immediacy, and generally on strategies for the implementation of NAPAs.

³ A draft of this paper is available from the secretariat

Annex I

Questions raised by the LEG in relation to the successful implementation of NAPAs¹

1. What are the sources of funding for implementation of NAPAs?
 - (a) National funding sources
 - (b) Non-UNFCCC official development assistance
 - (c) LDC Fund and other UNFCCC funds
2. Does the LDC Fund need eligibility criteria to address issues such as adaptive capacity, relationship to climate change, urgency and immediacy? If there are eligibility criteria, what can be done when there are issues of meeting eligibility?
3. Do we and how do we address the incremental costs of global benefits and the implementation of adaptation measures?
4. How can we ensure maximum funding for implementation of NAPAs from the various sources, for example, seeking co-financing for the adaptation needs through, inter alia, poverty reduction strategy (PRS) initiatives?
5. How can we ensure equity of opportunity for support for NAPA implementation?
 - (a) For all LDCs?
 - (b) Irrespective of submission date?
6. What criteria could/should be used for prioritizing NAPA proposals?
 - (a) Between NAPAs?
 - (b) Within NAPAs, i.e. within country priorities?
 - (c) With a regional approach?
7. How can we ensure adequate funding for the implementation of NAPAs?
 - (a) Will the LDC Fund be replenished sufficiently and predictably?
 - (b) What range of NAPAs, i.e. project size/cost, may be supported by the potential funding sources?
8. What else needs to be done to assist countries to prepare NAPAs which are feasible and attractive to funders? Do countries require further technical support?

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¹ These questions were prepared by the LEG and are reproduced here without editing.