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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 activities of the Consultative Group of Experts
on National Communications from Parties not included
in Annex I to the Convention**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

This document contains reports on the fifth and sixth meetings of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) relating to the implementation of its work plan for 2005–2006. It also contains a report on the CGE hands-on training workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20 to 24 March 2006.

The Subsidiary Body for Implementation, after having considered the lessons learned and the recommendations by the CGE, may wish to provide additional guidance on the implementation of the remaining regional hands-on training workshops and the activities of the CGE for 2006.

* This document is submitted after the due date to include the report of the workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region that was held from 20 to 24 March 2006.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of Parties (COP), by its decision 3/CP.8 mandated the secretariat to facilitate the work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and to compile reports on its meetings and workshops for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

B. Scope of the note

2. This note contains reports of the CGE at its fifth meeting held in Montreal, Canada, from 24 to 25 November 2005 and its sixth meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 17 to 18 March 2006. It also includes the report and recommendations of the CGE hands-on training workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20 to 24 March 2006.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

3. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation, after having considered the lessons learned and the recommendations by the CGE, may wish to provide additional guidance on the implementation of the remaining regional hands-on training workshops and the activities of the CGE for 2006.

II. Report of the fifth meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts

4. The fifth meeting of the CGE, held in Montreal, Canada, from 24 to 25 November 2005, was chaired by Ms. Emily Ojoo-Massawa (Kenya) and attended by 16 members of the CGE, including three members from international organizations. The objectives of the meeting were to finalize the report of the CGE on the outcomes of the examination of 41 initial national communications, to prepare the work plan of the CGE for 2006, and to finalize the survey on financial and technical support to Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) for the preparation of their national communications.

A. Preparation of the Consultative Group of Experts report to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation at its twenty-fourth session

5. The terms of reference of the CGE annexed to decision 3/CP.8 mandated the CGE to identify and assess technical problems and constraints that have affected the preparation of initial national communications by non-Annex I Parties, and to identify and assess difficulties encountered by non-Annex I Parties in the use of the guidelines and methodologies for preparing national communications and to make recommendations for their improvement.

6. At the seventeenth session of the SBI, the CGE presented a report on the outcomes of the examination of 81 initial national communications submitted to the secretariat as of April 2002.¹ At SBI 24, the CGE will be reporting on the outcomes of its examination of 41 additional initial national communications submitted to the secretariat between May 2002 and April 2005 (FCCC/SBI/2006/4).

7. In preparing the report, the thematic groups on national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, vulnerability and adaptation, mitigation and cross-cutting issues of the CGE discussed the technical constraints encountered by non-Annex I Parties in preparing their initial national communications. One of the constraints encountered by the CGE in drafting the report is its inability to fully analyse some of the 41 initial national communications because English translations are not always available.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2002/15.

B. Measures to improve access to financial and technical support

8. In July 2005, the CGE, with the assistance of the secretariat, conducted a survey on existing activities and programmes to facilitate and support the preparation of second and subsequent national communications by non-Annex I Parties. The CGE will use the analysis of the results of the survey to prepare the report on measures to improve access to financial and technical support. The group was unable to conclude its work at SBI 23 because only a small number of completed survey forms were returned to the secretariat. The Chair of the CGE reported on the status of this report and requested Parties and bilateral and multilateral agencies to cooperate in providing the CGE with the needed information.

9. In analysing the available information, the CGE observed discrepancies in the information provided by some Parties. The information on financial and technical support provided to non-Annex I Parties relating to national communications and to other activities under the Convention are not disaggregated, so it is difficult to assess the actual support provided to work on national communications. There is a need for the CGE to clarify further the information provided by requesting additional information from Parties.

C. Status of regional hands-on training workshops

10. After having organized four hands-on training workshops on national GHG inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessments and mitigation assessments, the CGE was scheduled to complete the following remaining training workshops in 2006: vulnerability and adaptation training workshop for the Asia and the Pacific region (March, Indonesia); vulnerability and adaptation training workshop for the Latin America and the Caribbean region (August, Paraguay); and the training workshop on national GHG inventories (September, South Africa).

11. In assessing the effectiveness of the training workshops conducted so far, the CGE saw the need to synthesize all the lessons learned in the process of implementing the regional hands-on training workshops into a comprehensive training strategy to facilitate the technical assistance provided to non-Annex I Parties by the National Communications Support Programme (NCSP) of the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and by bilateral and multilateral agencies. Some of the lessons identified by the CGE indicate that:

- (a) Models are useful tools if the technical information generated is linked with socio-economic issues;
- (b) The use of trainers from developing countries was important and useful in the success of the training programme;
- (c) Training of trainers, and development of training materials for use at the national level, are important activities in building national capacity.

D. Cooperation with the National Communications Support Programme

12. The group noted the continued cooperation with the NCSP in providing technical support to non-Annex I Parties in the preparation of their national communications. In implementing its work programme, the NCSP assured the group that it will take into account the recommendations for follow-up activities provided by the participants at the regional hands-on training workshops. As a result of recommendations made at the global hands-on training workshop on mitigation, the NCSP is conducting follow-up training on the long-range energy alternatives planning (LEAP) system from 3 to 7 April 2006 in Cairo, Egypt.

13. The CGE requested the secretariat to work with the NCSP in developing a matrix of activities that will include time frames and indications of who will be responsible in implementing such activities. The matrix will serve as the basis for the CGE and the NCSP to identify areas for further collaboration.

III. Report of the sixth meeting of the group

14. The sixth meeting of the CGE, held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 17 to 18 March 2006, was chaired by Mr. Mohammed Asaduzzaman (Bangladesh) and attended by 16 members of the CGE, including three members from international organizations. On behalf of the Government of Indonesia, Ms. Masnellyarti Hilman, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, welcomed the group and wished it success in accomplishing its objectives for the meeting. The objectives were to prepare a report of the group's activities to provide technical support for the preparation of non-Annex I Party national communications, to strengthen cooperation with other expert groups under the Convention and the NCSP, and to implement the requests by the SBI, at its twenty-third session, for technical advice.

A. Support to the preparation of non-Annex I Party national communications

15. The group is developing a template on cross-cutting issues (transfer of technologies, research and systematic observation, capacity-building, education, training and public awareness, and information and networking) to assist non-Annex I Parties in providing the information under the section on "other information considered relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention" in the national communications. The draft template will be shared with other expert groups for additional inputs before the CGE presents it to the SBI for consideration.

16. The CGE discussed its publications and communications strategy in order to reach out to a broader set of stakeholders that may use the training materials and the various technical reports produced by the group. As part of the strategy, the group agreed to make the side events during the SBI sessions more interactive and to use them as opportunities to inform Parties about the work of the CGE and to receive feedback. The group will also use the feedback collected by the NCSP from country project team leaders on the preparation of national communications to analyse the technical gaps and constraints encountered by Parties, and to provide recommendations in this regard.

B. Implementation of the hands-on training workshops

17. The CGE saw the need to conduct post-training assessments of the effectiveness of its training workshops by monitoring the use of the tools and methods by experts who had attended them. The NCSP may be able to provide information to the CGE on how the training workshop assisted the experts in improving the preparation of national communications. Regular questionnaires sent to the experts may also provide feedback to the CGE on the effectiveness of the hands-on training programme and suggest what other technical support is needed to complete the national communications in a timely manner.

18. The CGE welcomed the initiatives of Parties and organizations to conduct training workshops using the training materials² developed by the group. One Party expressed interest in organizing and funding follow-up training on national GHG inventories for the Asia and the Pacific region. The CGE will strengthen its cooperation with bilateral and multilateral agencies to encourage them to conduct follow-up training programmes.

C. Provision of technical recommendations to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

19. At the twenty-third session of the SBI, Parties requested the CGE to develop a cost-effective and comprehensive training strategy and other technical support, such as local training and networking of

² <http://unfccc.int/resource/cd_roms/na1/start.htm>.

experts, to assist non-Annex I Parties in preparing their national communications. The CGE requested the secretariat to prepare an analytical paper on options for future technical support for the preparation of non-Annex I Party national communications to assist the group in developing the training strategy.

20. The paper provided the CGE with an overview on what has been accomplished so far in the provision of technical support to non-Annex I Parties, on trends in submission of the second and, where appropriate, third national communications, and on the needs and possible support that may be provided. After an in-depth discussion, the group agreed to prepare a training strategy for consideration at its next meeting.

21. The CGE also discussed the request from Parties at SBI 23 to prepare, for SBI 25, a report on ways to improve access to financial and technical support provided for the preparation of national communications. The group outlined the elements of the report and agreed to prepare a technical paper for finalization at its next meeting. In preparing the technical paper, the group will focus its analysis on the process for accessing financial and technical support, including identifying the resources that have been provided, the gaps in technical support and options to address the constraints.

D. Status of cooperation with other expert groups

22. At SBI 23, Parties mandated the CGE to cooperate with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) in the implementation of its work programme. In particular, Parties requested the CGE to cooperate with LEG in providing advice on how to integrate information contained in national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) into the second and subsequent national communications. The CGE will also cooperate with the EGTT in determining how the results of technology needs assessments (TNAs) could feed into the national communications.

23. The group will prepare an options paper on how to proceed in responding to the above-mentioned mandate from Parties. At the same time, the Chair of the CGE will meet with chairs of the LEG and EGTT at SBI 24 to discuss the mechanism for cooperation in preparing the reports relating to the integration of NAPAs and TNAs into the national communications of non-Annex I Parties. The Chair of the CGE will also discuss the planned joint workshop of the expert groups to exchange technical information on vulnerability and adaptation.

IV. Report of the hands-on training workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region

24. The terms of reference of the CGE annexed to decision 3/CP.8 mandated the CGE to provide technical advice and support to non-Annex I Parties by organizing and conducting workshops, including hands-on training workshops at the regional or subregional level, on national GHG inventories, vulnerability and adaptation, and mitigation, as well as training on the use of the guidelines for the preparation of second and subsequent national communications.

25. The CGE conducted a training workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region from 20 to 24 March 2006 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Sixty-four experts from 39 non-Annex I Parties, and six members of the CGE, including representatives of UNDP and UNEP, attended the workshop. The workshop was made possible through the financial support provided by the Governments of Australia, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The NCSP provided the trainer for the climate change and socio-economic models. As host to the workshop, the Government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment, also provided financial and logistical support to the workshop.

26. The objective of the workshop was to familiarize experts from the Asia and the Pacific region, who are involved in the preparation of second national communications, with the UNFCCC guidelines

for reporting of vulnerability and adaptation assessments and with tools for conducting and integrating sectoral assessments.

27. Five trainers covered the following topics: overview of various frameworks used in vulnerability and adaptation, integration of vulnerability and adaptation assessments, climate change and socio-economic scenarios and impacts, and vulnerability and adaptation assessments (coastal zones, water resources, agriculture and human health). Tools used by the trainers to elaborate the different topics of the workshop included models such as the Model for the Assessment of Greenhouse-gas Induced Climate Change/SCENario GENerator (MAGICC/SCENGEN), Digital Interactive Vulnerability Analysis (DIVA), and Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) System, Decision Support System for Agro-technology Transfer (DSSAT).

28. Participants from China, Cook Islands and Uzbekistan presented case studies on their experiences in conducting vulnerability and adaptation assessments in coastal zones, agriculture and water sectors. The case studies showed that the application of tools depends on the national circumstances and on the complexity or simplicity of the country, as well as on the urgent and immediate versus the long-term needs.

29. One of the lessons learned from the workshop is that in a regional training workshop involving participants from countries with varying ecosystems and development priorities, ensuring that the training addresses the needs of all the participants is a major challenge. Another lesson is that active involvement of the participants requires proper allocation of time for individual and group exercises.

30. Questionnaires were distributed to the participants to obtain their evaluation of the training materials and the trainers and to obtain views on how to improve future vulnerability and adaptation workshops. Most participants highly rated the effectiveness of the trainers and the training materials, but some felt that additional modules could be included in the training package to cover other sectors/areas of economic importance such as marine/fisheries, tourism, forestry/biodiversity, integrated assessments, natural disaster and risk assessments. Others suggested the need for capacity-building in climate/socio-economic scenario development and the integration of vulnerability and adaptation into national sustainable development programmes

31. Participants also emphasized the need to complement the training workshop with in-country training on the use of tools and methods, training of trainers and training of other national experts in the health, water and agriculture sectors. In this regard, the secretariat noted that the CGE is currently working on a comprehensive training strategy and that such initiatives, and how to tap regional centres of excellence to conduct such activities, are under discussion. The following are highlights of the recommendations made by the participants to the CGE:

- (a) Conduct a more focused training workshop taking into account subregional needs and priorities in vulnerability and adaptation;
- (b) Ensure that the vulnerability and adaptation training materials are updated as new regional models for climate change are made available;
- (c) Improve the training materials in the health sector by introducing new tools and methods;
- (d) Prepare a list of existing tools and methods in vulnerability and adaptation with indications of their strengths and constraints;
- (e) Allow more time for exercises and group interaction;
- (f) Provide more trainers for a larger group of trainees to ensure that the participants are assisted in the use of the tools.

V. Conclusions

32. The CGE is expected to complete its mandate to provide technical support to Parties through the conduct of regional training workshops on GHG inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and mitigation assessments in 2006. As a result of the regional training workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessments for the Asia and the Pacific region, experts from non-Annex I Parties expressed the need for CGE to provide a more focused technical support at the subregional level as some tools and methods introduced at the workshop are not applicable to the circumstances at the subregional level. Experts also expressed the need for the CGE to assist them in accessing and/or developing tools and methods on specific areas of vulnerability such as the water, agriculture, health, tourism and marine/fisheries sectors.

33. The lessons learned from the implementation of the regional training workshops will provide useful inputs into the development of possible future technical support to non-Annex I Parties. In this regard, the CGE, at its seventh meeting, will develop a comprehensive training strategy to address the needs identified. In addition, it will actively cooperate with the NCSP, bilateral and multilateral agencies and other international organizations to ensure that experiences gained from the CGE training workshops are considered in the design of future technical support programmes.
