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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE
Twenty-sixth session
Bonn, 7–18 May 2007

Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Research and systematic observation

Views on how the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and regional and international climate change research programmes in the context of decision 9/CP.11

Submissions from Parties

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its twenty-fourth session, agreed to explore how it might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11. The SBSTA invited Parties and these programmes to submit to the secretariat, by 23 February 2007, their views on this subject, for consideration by the SBSTA at its twenty-sixth session (FCCC/SBSTA/2006/5, para. 46).

2. The secretariat has received 8 such submissions. In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, these submissions are attached and reproduced[*] in the language in which they were received and without formal editing.

[*] These submissions have been electronically imported in order to make them available on electronic systems, including the World Wide Web. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the texts as submitted.

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* This submission is supported by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey.

PAPER NO. 1: AUSTRALIA

Views on Promoting an effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes

Australian Submission to SBSTA-26

February, 2007

The 24th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice invited Parties to submit their views on how the SBSTA might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11.

Comments

Australia welcomes the opportunity to submit views on the issue of Research and how to improve the dialogue between Parties and the international and regional research organisations. Australia would like to thank the international and regional organisations for compiling their summary of current research and priorities as compiled by the UNFCCC Secretariat in /unfccc/sbsta/eng/misc15.pdf

Climate change creates a demand for information that exceeds what was required in the recent past. This information may be observational data that provides a record of how the climate is changing across the globe. It may also be scientific research to understand what future changes are likely and why. Every day policy makers are faced with decisions that rely on timely and accurate information on climate change. It is important that the right information is available to inform this process. It is equally important that the evolution of scientific understanding, whilst always relevant, not be unduly influenced to become policy prescriptive.

Australia considers that the IPCC, which was formed to fill a niche between the research community and the UNFCCC, is the primary body for assessing the adequacy of climate change research. Whilst not there to undertake research, it does have the mechanisms available to it, to generate interest from the research community in areas of research relevant to questions that need answers from policy-makers. We feel that the IPCC should remain the primary vehicle that links the UNFCCC into the scientific community.

Information flow, however, is very valuable. The regular meetings and rigorous documentation of the FCCC offer a forum for a two-way dialogue between the research organisations and the SBSTA (Parties). An initial exchange of ideas was made at SBSTA24 in which an ESSP side-event informed the SBSTA on current work programs relevant to the needs of the Convention. Such forums are valuable for information flow and it would be highly desirable to schedule further side-events on a semi-regular basis. Research needs are continually evolving and therefore a regular exchange of ideas is very useful.

In addition to the side-event program, the SBSTA at its twenty-fourth session requested the international and regional research organisations report their views on research needs relating to the Convention, including the identification of any gaps in their research programmes. Australia considers that like the side-events, this serves a useful role in sharing information, not to mention the value in programmes

examining their own priorities and how well they match the needs of the community. SBSTA then has an important role to encourage Parties to assess their own national research priorities and encourage activity in the areas identified to be "gaps" much as it has done regarding gaps in systematic observation programmes.

This then leaves the matter of the most effective way that research organisations can report to the SBSTA. Australia believes that an arrangement where each organisation is requested to report in isolation is not the best approach. There will be little consistency and comparability amongst the reports from the different programmes as the emphasis will be in different areas and the level of detail provided will differ. What would be more effective is if the research community itself organised the reporting to SBSTA such that there was a level of consistency in reporting. On the face of it, the ESSP, through its Partners would be the ideal vehicle for this coordination process.

Australia would like to take this chance to underline its position outlined in previous submissions, namely we believe that it remains the role of the scientific community to identify the gaps in research that may in turn relate to questions that policy makers seek answers to. It would be highly inappropriate for a political process such as the SBSTA to try and negotiate which are the most important research areas and then to try and direct the scientific community to re-prioritise accordingly. However, the flow of information, as proposed in this submission, can only lead to a better informed research and policy community and lead to gaps in research receiving attention.

PAPER NO. 2: CHINA

China's views on How to Facilitate a More Effective Dialogue between Parties and the Regional and International Climate Change Research Programmes Under Research and Systematic Observation

The 24th session of Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice invited Parties to submit to the Secretariat their views on how to facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes.(Ref FCCC/SBSTA/2006/5).China welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on this issue.

It is the view of China that a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes (hereinafter referred to as Programmes) is of great importance for developing countries. In order to facilitate such an effective dialogue, it is necessary to establish a mechanism to regularly communicate and share information between Parties and the Programmes, such as regular dialogues, workshops or forums, etc., to promote understanding and cooperation between them, and to strengthen support of capacity building activities and programmes in developing countries.

PAPER NO. 3: GERMANY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES

SUBMISSION BY GERMANY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES

This submission is supported by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia and Turkey

Berlin, 27 February 2007

Subject: **Research and systematic observation:**
Views on how the SBSTA might facilitate a more effective dialogue between parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decisions 9/CP.11

In response to the invitation at the 25th session of SBSTA, this submission expresses the views of the European Union on how to facilitate a more effective dialogue between the Parties and the science community.

Background

Parties to the UNFCCC have recognised the need to strengthen the dialogue between the science community and policy makers. Since 2002, SBSTA has started to promote interaction among the scientific community and the Parties. Parties welcomed efforts of the national, regional and international global change research programmes to further promote and coordinate research in response to the needs of the Convention and invited them to provide periodic updates on their scientific activities.

EU reemphasises the importance of communication between policy makers and the science community and sees the need for an enhanced process that would allow the research needs and questions of direct relevance to the parties of the convention to be conveyed to the scientific community.

The pivotal role of IPCC role in providing scientific, technical and economic knowledge on climate change to the Convention is unchallenged. However, there is a need to strengthen the communication between the science and the policy communities to ensure that some aspects of the research agendas are more policy relevant and new scientific developments feed into the international policy-making process.

Proposal

- We propose that a science-policy dialogue is established whereby the research need of the Convention can be communicated to the science community. The aim of the dialogue is to provide a forum where Parties can express their views on research needs and priorities relevant to the Convention process.
- The dialogue would build on activities already on the way across the world to facilitate communications between the science and policy communities.
- The dialogue would include the participation of international and regional research programmes, the IPCC, international and regional networks as well as national research centres, paying special attention to participation from developing countries.
- The dialogue could be coordinated by one of the international research programmes. We have already had initial discussions with some of the international research programmes, which have expressed a strong interest in assisting the development of a science-policy dialogue. It would be useful to also include the UNFCCC Secretariat in this dialogue . The synthesis report on research needs prepared by the Secretariat (FCCC/SBSTA/2006/INF.2) would serve as basis to identify priorities.
- The dialogue may take the form of regular meetings, held back to back with the Convention meetings to facilitate the participation of policy makers and could also include regional workshops focussing on sectoral needs or specific themes relevant for particular regions. The workshops should be organised consistently in order to yield useful results to be communicated back to the Convention.

The EU is looking forward to cooperating with other Parties to further develop these ideas at SBSTA26.

PAPER NO. 4: INDIA

SUBMISSION BY INDIA

India's Views on how to facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes.

India is pleased to submit its views on ways to improve interactions between Parties and regional and International climate change research programmes to fulfill the needs of the Convention. International and regional research programmes on climate change have made significant contributions to the understanding of climate change and India appreciates these efforts. Further expansion of research capabilities will require stronger links between climate change research programmes at national, regional and global levels, and enhancing the contribution of developing countries though capacity building efforts as outlined in 9/CP.11.

Climate change presents a very challenging dimension in the south Asian region – in terms of the unique climate of the tropics, and in terms of impacts on the numerous developing and small island countries in the region. While the former stems from gaps in our present understanding of tropical oceans and atmosphere, the latter highlights the complex task of enabling developmental demands while conserving highly stressed resources in an economically and culturally diverse social context. Understanding these regional complexities will require close coordination with the international and regional research programs. With these view, the following actions are suggested –

- Informal meetings and workshop with representatives of the programmes, such as those proposed to be held during SBSTA 26 and 28 are ideal means for furthering interactions. Similar activities, including Q & A sessions could be planned at regular intervals to facilitate dialogue between Parties and international programs.

- In view of uncertainties in assessments of climate change impacts at regional scale due to regional complexities and heterogeneities, there is a strong need for the dialogue between Parties and research programs to evolve a regional focus in climate change research.

- The Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) has guided the preparation of Regional Action Plans, consisting projects that are focused on enhancing the strength of regional networks to monitor climate variables and improve regional capacities for their usage.
  Implementation of such regional initiatives will address specific research needs of Parties and also serve as platforms to bring out future requirements.

- International programmes such as WCRP and IGBP have launched research campaigns to understand regional climate processes from time to time in the past. These initiatives have provided a focus on local research needs pertaining to understanding of climate change and international exchange of views on the programmes. International and regional programmes may be invited to consider and support a larger number of regional initiatives like the recently launched Monsoon Asia Integrated Regional Study (MAIRS) by the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP).

- Platforms created for exchange of views, such as International conferences and workshops supported by Programmes, should include the natural and the social sciences for meeting the requirements of the Convention as stated in 9/CP.11. These events should be represented by all the four constituents of the ESSP (WCRP, IGBP, IHDP and DIVERSITAS) including the new joint projects on carbon, food and water; which are likely to be of relevance to the Parties.

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PAPER NO. 5: JAPAN

Views on how the SBSTA might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11

Submission by the Government of Japan

Japan welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on how the SBSTA might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11, invited by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) at its 24th Session in May 2006 (FCCC/SBSTA/2006/5, paragraph 46).

To implement climate change research in an effective and efficient manner, communication, cooperation and coordination among the Parties, and regional and international research programmes and networks are important. Therefore, Japan believes that SBSTA can play an active role in enhancing such communication, cooperation and coordination by providing valuable opportunities and relevant guidance.

The following example illustrates how activities under SBSTA are effective in enhancing dialogue and cooperation between Parties and the climate change research programmes:

Japan has been cooperating with Caribbean and Central-South American countries within a World Bank funding framework in order to promote regional adaptation studies. Experts from these countries are trained on numerical analysis of computed data to make use of the latest simulation and projection outcomes from Japan's super-high resolution global climate model. The cooperation has been most beneficial for both sides. This successful cooperation was initiated after Japan's side event at COP10, where the research outcomes of a climate model to study detail regional features of the climate under global warming were presented.

In conclusion, from the above experience, Japan suggests that SBSTA promotes the cooperative research activities among Parties and regional and/or international research programmes in order to address the needs of the Convention.

PAPER NO. 6: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submission of the United States
Views on how SBSTA might facilitate more effective dialogue between Parties and regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11
February 23, 2007

The 24th Session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice in May 2006 (SBSTA 24) invited Parties to submit their views on "how SBSTA might facilitate more effective dialogue between Parties and regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11."

The United States thanks the Secretariat for organizing the special side event on research at SBSTA 24. We appreciate the opportunities we have had to discuss research priorities of international, regional, and national climate change research programs at SBSTA 24 and at other side events and international fora. The United States welcomes such opportunities to learn more about the international science priorities evolving within the research communities and the potential prospects for further collaboration.

It is clear that a strong focus on climate research is critical to characterizing and reducing uncertainties essential to informed decision making. What is not clear, however, is the need, as expressed by some Parties, for additional workshops or side events to discuss how SBSTA might facilitate more effective dialogue between Parties and these research organizations and programs. In our view, structures for such dialogue already exist and are functioning well, and that dialogue is already occurring in a fruitful, interactive, and effective manner. There is no clear need for any additional structure or form of higher-level coordination.

In addition, the United States believes it is not appropriate for the SBSTA to determine research priorities for national, regional or international research programs. SBSTA's role lies in facilitating the sharing of research results and information on activities underway and on opportunities for collaboration. The SBSTA can also highlight the value for countries of working more closely with existing programs and organizations.

Existing international research organizations and programs make their own decisions on research priorities, and decisions to improve the functioning of these organizations will happen within those organizations. National governments, in turn, set their own research priorities, based on their national needs. If there are specific items of concern, then it is for the research programs themselves to adjust their structures in response to specific suggestions. The system as a whole, however, generally works well.

For example, all four of the major international global environmental change research programs have made and are making substantive contributions, not only to improving scientific understanding of the Earth system processes that underlie climate change, but also to improving and expanding the basis, in terms of data sets and models, that contribute to the work of SBSTA and the COP. These programs include the World Climate Research Program (WCRP); the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP); the International Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change (IHDP); and the international biodiversity research program Diversitas.

The WCRP, for example, provides the forum that allows physical climate science experts from across the globe to prioritize scientific questions and develop international activities and programs targeting key

challenges. The WCRP helps organize common methodologies, experiments, standards, intercomparisons, and data stewardship activities that encourage the broader international research community to engage in climate change research. Finally, the WCRP is uniquely positioned through its three international sponsors (WMO, ICSU and IOC) to work with a vast and varied set of stakeholders.

The accomplishments and plans of the other three programs are equally valuable and effective, even though we do not have the space to detail all their accomplishments here. We encourage governments to continue their involvement and support in these international climate change research programs.

We look forward to the upcoming informal discussions on these issues at SBSTA 26, but at this time, we remain unconvinced of the need for expanded service or activities in this particular area.

PAPER NO. 7: URUGUAY

Research and Systematic Observation

Views on how the SBSTA might facilitate a more effective dialogue between Parties and the regional and international climate change research programmes, in the context of decision 9/CP.11

Submission from Uruguay

December 26th, 2006

As stated in decision 9/CP.11, Uruguay recognizes the need for stronger links between national, regional and international climate change research programmes, and the need to enhance the contribution of developing countries to climate change research efforts, including by building the capacity of these countries to contribute to and participate in climate change research.

In this sense, it is a priority, as also established in decision 9/CP.11, to identify research needs and priorities to support the implementation of the Convention as well as national efforts to cope with climate change.

In particular, Uruguay research priorities are those linked to bringing support to the local research institutions in the use of the climate scenarios models that would be the base for the vulnerability and adaptation assessments. This support includes the facilitation of the links and knowledge exchange between local research organizations and the international developers of these models.

The promotion and support of the creation of Regional Climate Research Centers is viewed by Uruguay as an effective way to build capacity in developing countries to contribute to and participate in climate change research. An example is the recently initiative to create an Education and Research Center of Meteorology and related Sciences of the MERCOSUR (South Common Market). This initiative will definitely need the support from international organizations to establish and develop a regional research and education programme that will help countries in the region in the implementation of the Convention as well as to cope with climate change.

The importance of systematic observation for understanding climate change has been recognised by the UNFCCC since the beginning of international negotiations on the subject, reflected in the content of Article 5 of the UNFCCC, which states that Parties shall support international efforts to strengthen systematic observation, taking into account the needs of developing countries for improving their capacities to participate in systematic observation.

As a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Uruguay is a member of a) the Global Observing System of the World Weather Watch, b) the Global Climate Observation System (GCOS) of the World Climate Research Programme and c) the Global Atmosphere Watch. In October 2003, Uruguay accessed the Chair of the Regional Association III (South America) of the WMO, henceforth efforts have been

made towards the improvement of both national and regional climate observation systems in the region.

Uruguay has a National Network of Meteorological, Climatic and Environmental Observation which carries out systematic and standardized observation under the direction and control of the National Directorate of Meteorology. This institution maintains, operates and updates a National Climate and Environment Database. Through the Directorate of Climatology and Documentation, it collects and elaborates data and produces and updates analysis, studies and research on climate and applied issues. In this regard, there is a strong need in Uruguay (and could be a common need in another developing countries) for receiving support to improve the maintenance of the installed systematic observation equipment as well as their modernization in some cases.

Uruguay considers that an important instrument for the implementation of Articles 4.1(g) and 5 has been the cooperation of the UNFCCC with the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) secretariat of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other agencies participating in WMO's Climate Agenda.

Regarding this point, Uruguay considers of great importance the assistance to GCOS focal points at national level, aiming at strengthening national coordination among the actors involved in climatic observations (meteorological, oceanographic and terrestrial) and at enhancing contacts and coordination between UNFCCC and GCOS, as well as to improve coordination inside GCOS networks.

In addition to that, Uruguay recognizes that the experience of the Regional Workshop Programme developed by GCOS has been an important element that helped to improve links between national climate change units and national meteorological services. In the case of Uruguay, it is important to emphasize that the Climate Change Unit belonging to the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Regulation and Environment of Uruguay, coordinates all the issues related with Climate Research with the National Meteorology Directorate and with the Science School of the Republic University. Moreover, coordination is being made with the National Meteorological Directorate regarding national activities with respect to the Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC, submitted by GCOS and endorsed by decision 5/CP.10.

PAPER NO. 8: UZBEKISTAN

The view of the Republic of Uzbekistan in regard to the form of SBSTA's facilitation of the more effective dialogue between the Parties and the regional and international climate change research programs

The Republic of Uzbekistan highly appreciates the role of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) in realization of Convention by the Parties in the area of research and systematic observations of climate.

SBSTA had carried out a good deal of work on revelation of the needs and priorities of research in regard to Convention. Overall analysis of materials got from the Parties in this direction of activities is rather comprehensively presented in FCCC/SBSTA/2006/Misc.3 и Add.1; FCCC/SBSTA/ 2006/Misc.12; FCCC/SBSTA/2006/Misc.13; FCCC/SBSTA/2006/Misc.14 и FCCC/ SBSTA/2006/Inf.2 documents.

Facilitation of the regional and international research programs being conducted on the climate change problem, and in particular in the fields of the problems of vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation from the part of SBSTA gives positive results. Nowadays the first priority is given to the long-term forecasting of the extreme weather phenomena, especially in the regions which are the most vulnerable from the point of view of the natural, economical and social aspects.

We think that observational network, monitoring of its activities and information products remains the most important priority of any research. To our opinion, it is necessary to upgrade the existing network of all kinds of observations (ground, oceanic, satellite, etc.) equipping it with the up-to-date measuring instruments, to introduce the modern methods and programs of the data processing and analysis. It is still an important problem to preserve the historical data, to fill the existing gaps, the issues of archiving and improving the access to the available data bases. For these purposes it is necessary to allocate additional funds and carry out further research at the global and regional levels.

It is especially necessary to distinguish the problems of the long-term forecasting of the extreme weather phenomena. A good deal of work is carried out in this direction at the national and regional levels. It is necessary to improve these activities including the dissemination of the advanced experience and facilitating the access to it.

We consider that SBSTA has to facilitate the further strengthening of coordination with international programs and agencies, especially with WMO, UNEP and others via which its feasible to conduct all relevant activities needed for strengthening the observational network including financing, updating and conduction of necessary studies.

One of the most important directions of activities in the Convention implementation is the upgrading and strengthening of capacity of the experts and researche workers. The practice shows that the workshops held by SBSTA, participation of scientist from developing countries and countries with the economy in transition in the international research programs of of the global and regional climate change are of a great use. We think that it is expedient to continue this advanced experience.

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