



United Nations

FCCC/SBI/2012/17



Framework Convention on
Climate Change

Distr.: General
27 September 2012

Original: English

Subsidiary Body for Implementation

Thirty-seventh session

Doha, 26 November to 1 December 2012

Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda

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 work of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention: report on the hands- on training workshop for the Latin America and Caribbean region on vulnerability and adaptation assessment

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention conducted a hands-on training workshop for the Latin America and Caribbean region on vulnerability and adaptation assessment in Saint Mary's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 9 to 13 July 2012. This report outlines the proceedings of the workshop and summarizes the feedback and recommendations on the workshop from the participants, the updated CGE training materials on vulnerability and adaptation assessment, and the financial, technical and institutional issues relating to the preparation of national communications.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1–6	3
A. Mandate.....	1–5	3
B. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation.....	6	3
II. Proceedings of the workshop	7–14	3
A. Opening of the workshop	7–12	3
B. Organization of the workshop	13–14	4
III. Summary of presentations.....	15–34	5
A. Country presentations.....	15	5
B. Vulnerability and adaptation framework	16–17	5
C. Vulnerability and adaptation assessment scenarios	18–21	5
D. Sectoral training sessions.....	22–31	6
E. Integration and communication	32–34	7
IV. Feedback and recommendations	35–42	8
A. Participants' feedback	36–41	8
B. Conclusion.....	42	10

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by decision 5/CP.15, reconstituted the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) for the period 2010–2012 in order to improve the process of the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties).
2. The terms of reference of the CGE stipulate that the CGE, in fulfilling its mandate, shall provide technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties on, inter alia, vulnerability and adaptation assessment, with a view to improving the accuracy, consistency and transparency of information in their national communications.¹
3. The terms of reference of the CGE are operationalized through its work programme for 2010–2012 developed at its first meeting, held in March 2010. The work programme was welcomed and taken note of by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its thirty-second session.¹
4. In accordance with its work programme, referred to in paragraph 3 above, the CGE, with the assistance of the secretariat, held a hands-on training workshop for the Latin America and Caribbean region on vulnerability and adaptation assessment in Saint Mary's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 9 to 13 July 2012 with a view to enhancing the capacity of national experts from the region involved in the process of the preparation of national communications.
5. By decision 5/CP.15, the COP requested the secretariat to facilitate the work of the CGE by organizing meetings and workshops and compiling reports of its meetings and workshops for consideration by the SBI.

B. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

6. The SBI, having considered this report, may wish to note the recommendations of the workshop participants and provide further guidance to the CGE on the provision of technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties on vulnerability and adaptation assessment.

II. Proceedings of the workshop

A. Opening of the workshop

7. The hands-on training workshop for the Latin America and Caribbean region on vulnerability and adaptation assessment was hosted by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda from 9 to 13 July 2012. Mr. Robelto Isaac, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing and the Environment, delivered the opening remarks, in which he welcomed the participants to Antigua and Barbuda and highlighted the impact of climate change in developing countries in general and its projected impacts on the various sectors in Antigua and Barbuda.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2010/10, paragraph 21.

8. Ms. Ruleta Camacho (Antigua and Barbuda), Chair of the CGE, thanked the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for hosting the workshop, welcomed the participants and outlined the workshop objectives. The secretariat provided a brief overview of the organization of the workshop.

9. The objectives of the workshop were the following:

(a) To build the capacity of national experts from non-Annex I Parties in the Latin America and Caribbean region in conducting vulnerability and adaptation assessments, which are reported under the Convention as part of the national communications;

(b) To seek and generate feedback on the draft updated CGE training materials on vulnerability and adaptation assessment with a view to improving them further;

(c) To serve as a platform for the exchange of views among Parties and with experts and prospective bilateral and multilateral donors.

10. A total of 30 national experts from 26 non-Annex I Parties in the Latin America and Caribbean region,² seven members of the CGE and a representative of the United Nations Environment Programme attended the workshop.

11. The workshop was held with a financial contribution from the European Union.

12. An average of 56 participants per day representing Parties in the Latin America and Caribbean region participated in the workshop through videoconferencing (WebEx).

B. Organization of the workshop

13. The hands-on training workshop, which was conducted over five days, comprised seven sessions as follows:

(a) The first session consisted of country presentations in which representatives of six countries from the region presented their experiences in conducting vulnerability and adaptation assessments in the context of the preparation of their national communications, highlighting their experiences and challenges;

(b) The second session covered an introduction to the vulnerability and adaptation framework, including institutional arrangements for conducting vulnerability and adaptation assessments on a sustainable basis. The session also covered how countries can plan for their vulnerability and adaptation assessment and select an appropriate and practical framework for the assessment;

(c) The third session was dedicated to climate change and socioeconomic scenarios, in which the participants were introduced to key concepts, the general steps involved in generating climate change and socioeconomic scenarios, and some of the commonly used and available methods, tools and associated data;

(d) The fourth and fifth sessions consisted of two sessions conducted in parallel and included sectoral vulnerability and adaptation assessments covering water resources, human health, agriculture and coastal resources;

(e) The sixth session covered cross-sectoral and multisectoral integration and the presentation of methods and results in national communications;

² Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

(f) The final session was an interactive discussion held on the national communication process. The workshop participants also provided recommendations on possible ways to further enhance the organization of future regional workshops.

14. The training, which included hands-on practical sessions, was conducted by resource persons and CGE members using the updated CGE training materials.³

III. Summary of presentations

A. Country presentations

15. Representatives of Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Saint Lucia presented brief overviews of information on vulnerability and adaptation assessment reported in their latest national communication and work related to the various adaptation measures within their countries. The participants also outlined institutional arrangements to undertake the vulnerability and adaptation assessments, including lessons learned, best practices and the way forward. This was followed by a question and answer session in which other participants also shared their national experiences.

B. Vulnerability and adaptation framework

16. The participants were introduced to the various terms, definitions and concepts used when conducting a vulnerability and adaptation assessment, as these terminologies are used differently by different stakeholders. In addition, the participants were also introduced to how non-Annex I Parties could effectively build up a sustainable reporting component by organizing a comprehensive national arrangement specifically targeting vulnerability and adaptation assessment. Planning of vulnerability and adaptation assessments, including analysing data availability, and the key steps required to successfully plan for, and deliver, the vulnerability and adaptation component of national communications, were covered.

17. The utility and importance of frameworks for examining the potential impacts of climate change and adaptation measures were covered in the second session. While the use of frameworks is not mandatory for vulnerability and adaptation assessments, they do provide consistency and transparency across the sectors. Available and published vulnerability and adaptation frameworks serve as a useful baseline for the development of tailored frameworks that draw on the conceptual underpinnings of a particular framework suitable for the country's specific circumstances. Outlines of some of the widely used vulnerability and adaptation frameworks were provided.

C. Vulnerability and adaptation assessment scenarios

18. The third session provided an overview of common models and outputs available for modelling climate change and socioeconomic scenarios, and examples of those outputs and possible approaches for customizing them to suit user demand were given.

³ The current CGE training materials, available on the UNFCCC website at http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/training_material/methodological_documents/items/349.php, are being updated.

1. Baseline socioeconomic scenarios

19. The segment on socioeconomic scenarios covered the following areas: the definition of the baseline socioeconomic scenarios; the utility of having those scenarios; and the supporting information that is available for baseline socioeconomic scenarios. The participants were introduced to the recommended key steps required for the development of socioeconomic scenarios, including information on the data required to develop those scenarios.

20. The presentation further covered the design, development and application of baseline socioeconomic scenarios for use in vulnerability and adaptation assessments, which are important for identifying appropriate adaptation measures. The participants were introduced to future directions in climate change scenario development, such as the use of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's new scenarios on representative concentration pathways calculations and data.

2. Climate change scenarios

21. The segment on climate change scenarios included a general overview of the evolution of climate change models, including general circulation models and regional climate models, and their corresponding advantages and limitations. This included literature on the definition and types of climate change scenarios and the steps required to develop them using regional climate models and other statistical tools. The participants also engaged in exercises accessing data on different climate variables, such as using the Climate Explorer,⁴ a research tool used to investigate the climate, and analysing and interpreting the data.

D. Sectoral training sessions

22. The sectoral training sessions included presentations on the overview of drivers, potential climate change impacts and adaptation measures. Various sector-specific methods, tools and data requirements were also covered.

1. Human health

23. The segment on the human health sector covered a number of topics, including the following: mapping of climate change and human health; an overview of the potential pathways and health impacts of climate variability and climate change; predictive tools for the future for assessing human health vulnerability to climate change; methods for determining a health adaptation baseline; health data to determine the current burden of climate-sensitive diseases; and an overview of tools available to determine the current burden of specific climate-sensitive diseases, such as malaria.

24. The participants engaged in interactive exercises identifying the following: priority themes for human health in national communications; key climate change factors and impacts on health; and coping capacities. The participants also engaged in exercises on human risk assessment and adaptation planning for human health.

2. Water resources

25. The segment on water resources covered the potential impacts of climate change on the availability and quality of water and how to assess those impacts. It also included understanding stakeholder analysis and the potential influence stakeholders have on the

⁴ The tool is available at <<http://climexp.knmi.nl/start.cgi?id=someone@somewhere>>.

water sector and on water planning and outlined an assessment case study for a hands-on exercise using a hypothetical river basin.

26. The trainer held demonstrations and conducted hands-on exercises using the water modelling model Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP), in which the participants gained first-hand experience of setting up and running WEAP by undertaking a case study on a hypothetical river basin in a small island developing State. The model takes into account critical factors such as the biophysical, socioeconomic, and institutional and policy factors that influence the quantity and quality of, and demand for, water, the key stakeholders and the nature and extent of water vulnerability.

3. Coastal resources

27. The presentation on coastal resources covered the drivers, including the El Niño/La Niña–Southern Oscillation, and the potential impacts of climate change on coastal zones. It also covered non-climatic drivers and uncertainty in local predictions, an overview of coastal vulnerability and rapid screening assessment. The participants were informed about commonly used tools and data that are freely available.

28. The participants engaged in interactive exercises aimed at familiarizing themselves with available tide data and predictions, understanding the basics of El Niño/La Niña and analysing different climatic variables, such as the sea surface temperature, wind and precipitation. The participants also engaged in an exercise identifying the key priority themes for coastal resources in their national communications, the key climate change drivers and impacts reported in their national communications, rapid screening assessment and available adaptation options.

4. Agriculture

29. The key objectives of this sectoral training were the following: to introduce the participants to climate change impacts on agriculture and food security and the global trends in agriculture, including the main reasons for concern; and to discuss the tools, models and processes available and used commonly for impact assessment in the agriculture sector.

30. The trainer held demonstrations and conducted hands-on exercises using the Decision Support System for Agro-technology Transfer (DSSAT), which is used for modelling the agriculture sector. The model can be used with various crops, such as maize and wheat, to assist various stakeholders, including researchers and farmers, in conducting sensitivity analyses, developing seasonal strategies and understanding crop rotation. The participants engaged in a practical application of DSSAT to estimate the statistical functions of yield response for some crops in their countries in order to evaluate climate change effects on the crops and to determine adaptation measures, such as changes in management in order to improve yield under various climate change scenarios.

31. The participants were also introduced to process-based models and their practical applications, including some commonly used statistical models based on the estimation of statistical functions of yield response.

E. Integration and communication

32. The sixth session focused on reporting requirements for national communications from non-Annex I Parties under the Convention and the way in which information related to vulnerability and adaptation assessment could be effectively communicated in national communications. The participants were informed about various ways in which information

can be sourced from various sectors and integrated in the vulnerability and adaptation assessment. An interactive, facilitated discussion to exchange views among the participants, and sharing of experiences with the resource persons, followed the presentation.

1. Integration

33. The presentation on integration highlighted the importance of integration both across and within the sectors in the framework of vulnerability and adaptation assessment. Impacts in one sector can adversely or positively affect another sector. Cross-sectoral and multisectoral integration is important in linking related sectors and various economic sectors. The presentation also focused on setting priorities, mainstreaming climate change, and monitoring and evaluation for successful integration. It included methods and examples of ranking vulnerabilities and adaptation options across the sectors, which is an essential element in prioritizing adaptation options.

2. Communication

34. The presentation on communication provided an overview of relevant provisions under the Convention on reporting information on vulnerability and adaptation from non-Annex I Parties as a part of their national communications. The segment also addressed general guidance, and gave some examples, on how to effectively present the results of the vulnerability and adaptation assessment, taking into account the target and audience of the report.

IV. Feedback and recommendations

35. During the final session, the participants identified a number of key points that they had learned at the workshop.

A. Participants' feedback

36. During the workshop, daily feedback was sourced from the workshop participants in order to gather their views on the substantive contents that were covered each day. In addition, an online survey was conducted after the workshop, which was also open to those who participated remotely. A total of 51 participants responded to the online survey. Their responses are summarized below.

37. Overall, the participants expressed that the hands-on training workshop met their expectations and welcomed the diversified nature of the workshop. They also highlighted the following as some of the most useful aspects of the training:

(a) Country presentations that included results from the past and/or ongoing vulnerability and adaptation assessments, lessons learned and good practices;

(b) The steps involved in selecting an appropriate vulnerability and adaptation framework;

(c) The guidance received on integration of the national communication process into national development plans, including the establishment of institutional arrangements to support the regular development of vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and the challenges faced by non-Annex I Parties;

(d) The steps involved in the development and application of socioeconomic and climate change scenarios, and references to available tools and data;

(e) The hands-on exercise on the various methods, tools and software used for vulnerability and adaptation assessment;

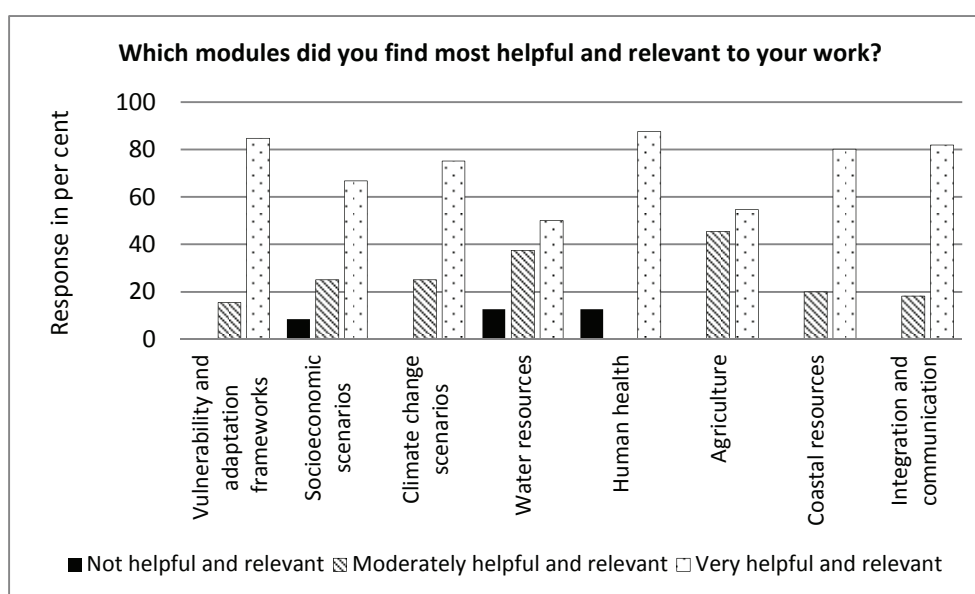
(f) The provision of various reference materials, and models and data sources, that can be used for further training at the national level and that these materials can also be made available to other national experts involved in the preparation of national communications;

(g) The sharing of experience with trainers and other national experts on vulnerability and adaptation assessment.

38. Most participants found the overall approach and content of the hands-on training workshop to be useful and relevant to their work or practice, as is evident from the results of the survey (see the figure below).

39. The participants also engaged in discussions relating to institutional, technical and financial aspects of the preparation of their national communications. In this context, the participants shared their national experiences, lessons learned, good practices and difficulties that they continue to face in preparing their national communications. Most participants highlighted the importance of networking among the regional national experts in order to promote South–South cooperation.

Compilation of evaluation responses provided by the participants of the workshop on vulnerability and adaptation assessment for the Latin America and Caribbean region



40. Most participants noted that their countries have completed at least two rounds of national communications and highlighted that there have been improvements in the quality of their latest national communications as a result of, inter alia, enhanced technical capacity, increased stakeholder engagement and the use of more robust and advanced data and methods. However, the participants also reiterated that they still continue to face certain constraints and barriers, mainly owing to the lack of sufficient data and information, sufficient technical expertise to make use of the more advanced tools available and robust institutional arrangements and because of the high dependence on non-national technical expertise. The participants stressed the importance of having continued access to such hands-on training workshops in the future and requested the CGE to explore options and means of providing such technical assistance at the in-country level. The participants also recommended that the CGE, in delivering its mandate on providing technical assistance to

non-Annex I Parties, take into consideration the emerging needs of the countries, such as enhancing the capacity of non-Annex I Parties to implement the identified adaptation options effectively.

41. The participants made the following recommendations for future hands-on training workshops on vulnerability and adaptation assessment:

(a) Enrich the training material with more practical work, case studies and examples from the region on vulnerability and adaptation assessment;

(b) Provide easy to follow step-by-step guides on how to use the models to conduct the case studies during the hands-on exercise;

(c) Ask the workshop participants, prior to the workshop, to bring additional country-specific data that could be used for the hands-on exercises during the sectoral training sessions;

(d) Explore options and means of providing such technical assistance at the in-country level in the future;

(e) Address the evolving needs of non-Annex I Parties, with an emphasis on moving from vulnerability and adaptation assessment to implementation of identified adaptation options;

(f) Establish a network among the national experts from the region involved in the national communication process.

B. Conclusion

42. The participants were appreciative of the training course and thanked the CGE and the secretariat for organizing the workshop and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and the people of Antigua and Barbuda for the warm welcome accorded to them and for hosting the workshop and providing the excellent facilities. The participants also thanked those Parties and organizations that funded the workshop.
