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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

Thirty-sixth session

Bonn, 14–25 May 2012

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Research and systematic observation

Matters emerging from the 2010 updated Global Climate Observing System implementation plan and related activities

Submission from the secretariat of the Global Climate Observing System

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its thirty-third session, welcomed the 2010 updated Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) implementation plan¹ and invited the GCOS secretariat to report on progress made in the implementation of that plan on a regular basis, at subsequent sessions of the SBSTA, as appropriate.²

2. In this regard, also at its thirty-third session, the SBSTA encouraged the GCOS to review, in broad consultation with relevant partners, the adequacy of observing systems for climate, such as by updating the *Second Report on the Adequacy of the Global Observing Systems for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC*. The SBSTA also noted the usefulness of updating the GCOS implementation plan on a regular basis, so as to take into consideration developments under the Convention and their related observational needs. It further agreed to consider issues related to the timing of GCOS contributions to the SBSTA at its thirty-fifth session.³

¹ *Update of the Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC*, a summary of which is contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2010/MISC.9.

² FCCC/SBSTA/2010/13, paragraphs 39 and 45.

³ FCCC/SBSTA/2010/13, paragraph 45.

FCCC/SBSTA/2012/MISC.4

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3. At its thirty-fourth session, the SBSTA agreed to defer its consideration of matters related to systematic observation, including issues related to the timing of the contributions of the GCOS to the SBSTA, to its thirty-sixth session.⁴

4. In response to the invitations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, the secretariat of the GCOS has submitted information on matters related to the 2010 updated GCOS implementation plan and related GCOS activities.⁵ In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, the submission is attached and reproduced* in the language in which it was received and without formal editing.

⁴ FCCC/SBSTA/2011/2, paragraph 56.

⁵ Also made available at <<http://unfccc.int/3714.php>>.

* This submission has been electronically imported in order to make it available on electronic systems, including the World Wide Web. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the text as submitted.

Submission from the secretariat of the Global Climate Observing System

Matters emerging from the updated GCOS Implementation Plan and related GCOS activities

At its thirty-third session, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) invited the GCOS Secretariat to report on a regular basis on progress made in the implementation of the 2010 update of the *Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC* at subsequent sessions of the SBSTA, as appropriate. In this regard, it encouraged the GCOS Steering Committee to review, in broad consultation with relevant partners, the adequacy of observing systems for climate, such as by updating the *Second Report on the Adequacy of the Global Observing Systems for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC*. It noted that updating the Implementation Plan on a regular basis would allow consideration of developments under the Convention and their related observational needs. The SBSTA deferred consideration of issues related to the timing of GCOS contributions to the SBSTA to its 36th session in May 2012.

In 2011, the GCOS Secretariat published an update of the 2006 GCOS report on *Systematic Observation Requirements for Satellite-based Products for Climate*, providing supplemental details to the satellite-based component of the 2010 update of the *Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC*. The complete version of the so-called Satellite Supplement is available at <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/gcos/Publications/gcos-154.pdf>. The report recognises in particular the importance of building data records and deriving products from the measurements made by satellites. It is intended primarily to assist those Parties and their multi-national agencies that provide Earth observation from space in their response to the requirements of the Implementation Plan.

The actions identified in the Implementation Plan and its Satellite Supplement address many of the needs for climate observations in support of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS); additional needs will continue to be assessed in GFCS planning and initial operation.

The GCOS Steering Committee and Secretariat have considered the timing of the GCOS improvement and assessment cycle. A new assessment of progress and adequacy, building on identification of needs for adaptation and provision of climate services in general, and informed by identification of uncertainties by the IPCC Fifth Assessment process, would be prepared by early 2015. This third adequacy report would be followed by a new Implementation Plan, to be published in 2016. The GCOS Secretariat will arrange for the data needs for adaptation and service provision to be reviewed in one or more workshops and link these workshops with UNFCCC and GFCS initiatives, beginning in late 2012 or early 2013.

The GCOS Secretariat continues to be involved in facilitating the development of the Climate for Development in Africa Programme (ClimDev Africa). As a member of the ClimDev Africa Steering Committee, it participated in the March 2012 meeting of the Committee. A Work Plan for the 2012-2014 period was considered, and resources for implementing some initial projects related to systematic observation will be considered for approval at a Donors Roundtable in April 2012 organized by the African Development Bank. Also in March, the Secretariat, in partnership with the Centro Internacional para la Investigacion del Fenomeno de El Nino (CIIFEN), organized a meeting in Ecuador for the countries of South America to consider priority needs for climate observations in support of climate services for the region. The workshop reached consensus on a number of needed actions and generated considerable momentum that is expected to lead to some significant improvements in the region's climate observing systems in the coming years.