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Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

**Report on the meeting of representatives from Parties on the outcomes of the
activities completed under the Nairobi work programme on impacts,
vulnerability and adaptation to climate change**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

A meeting of Parties on the outcomes of the activities completed under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 7 to 9 April 2008. During the meeting participants appraised the implementation of the Nairobi work programme during its first phase, that is, work on specific activities mandated by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, the engagement of organizations, institutions, experts, communities and the private sector, and the wide dissemination of outputs of the Nairobi work programme. Participants also identified issues for consideration for the second phase of the Nairobi work programme.

* This document was submitted after the due date owing to the timing of the meeting.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its twenty-fifth session, requested the secretariat to organize, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, an informal meeting of representatives from Parties before its twenty-eighth session to consider the outcomes of activities under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change¹ completed prior to this meeting.² At its twenty-seventh session, the SBSTA requested the secretariat to strive to engage experts and representatives of relevant organizations in this meeting.³

2. The SBSTA agreed to consider, at its twenty-eighth session, the outcome of this informal meeting, views of Parties on further activities,⁴ outcomes of the additional activities completed by that session, information presented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and other new scientific information, as well as relevant activities from international and regional institutions, with the aim of contributing to the identification of further activities, as well as appropriate timing and modalities, for inclusion in the Nairobi work programme, in accordance with decision 2/CP.11, paragraph 6 (d).⁵

B. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

3. The SBSTA may wish to consider this report at its twenty-eighth session as part of its consideration of the outputs from activities completed prior to the twenty-eighth session of the SBSTA and its consideration of further activities under the Nairobi work programme.

C. Background

4. The overall objective of the Nairobi work programme is to assist all Parties, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, to improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, and to make informed decisions on practical adaptation actions and measures to respond to climate change on a sound scientific, technical and socio-economic basis, taking into account current and future climate change and variability.⁶

II. Meeting proceedings

5. The secretariat organized the meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, from 7 to 9 April 2008. The Governments of Japan, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provided financial support. Ms. Helen Plume, Chair of the SBSTA, chaired the meeting. The meeting was attended by 39 representatives from Parties and 12 representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that are active in the Nairobi work programme.⁷

6. At the opening Ms. Prasertsuk Chamornmarn, Director of the National Environment Board, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and

¹ The Nairobi work programme was previously known as the five-year programme of work of the SBSTA on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, which was adopted by decision 2/CP.11.

² FCCC/SBSTA/2006/11, paragraph 20.

³ FCCC/SBSTA/2007/16, paragraph 19.

⁴ Contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2008/MISC.3 and Add.1.

⁵ FCCC/SBSTA/2006/11, paragraph 22.

⁶ Decision 2/CP.11, annex, paragraph 1.

⁷ Documentation, including presentations and the meeting's background paper, is available at <www.unfccc.int/4290.php>.

Environment of Thailand, delivered a welcome address. During an introductory session, the secretariat provided background information on the approach taken to implement the Nairobi work programme, outcomes achieved so far, potential next steps, and the mandate and expected outcome of the meeting. During subsequent sessions, presentations were made on the outcomes of workshops and expert meetings that had been held under the Nairobi work programme.

7. Representatives from Parties made numerous interventions appraising the implementation of the Nairobi work programme during its first phase, specifically:

- (a) Undertaking specific activities mandated by the SBSTA;
- (b) Engaging organizations, institutions, experts, communities and the private sector to catalyse new and innovative adaptation action in support of the objective of the Nairobi work programme;
- (c) Widely disseminating outputs of the Nairobi work programme.

8. In addition, representatives of organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Practical Action, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), presented their experience in engaging in the implementation of the Nairobi work programme. The meeting concluded with a session on possible next steps and follow-up activities during the second phase of the Nairobi work programme.

III. Outcomes of the activities completed under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

9. Participants at the meeting welcomed the overall approach to the implementation of the Nairobi work programme taken by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA; this approach focuses on catalysing actions on adaptation at all levels, and ensuring that the activities and outputs target stakeholders at all levels and across all sectors.

10. Participants agreed that the outcomes of the completed activities in the first phase constitute an effective initial contribution to achieving the objective of the Nairobi work programme and its expected outcomes as laid out in decision 2/CP.11:

- (a) Enhanced capacity at international, regional, national, sectoral and local levels to further identify and understand impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation responses, and to select and implement practical, effective and high priority adaptation actions;
- (b) Improved information and advice to the Conference of the Parties (COP) and its subsidiary bodies on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, including facilitating the implementation of decision 1/CP.10, where relevant;
- (c) Enhanced development, dissemination and use of knowledge from practical adaptation activities;
- (d) Enhanced cooperation among Parties, relevant organizations, business, civil society and decision makers, aimed at enhancing their ability to manage climate change risks;
- (e) Enhanced integration of actions to adapt to climate change with sustainable development.

A. Outcomes of mandated activities under the Nairobi work programme

11. At the time of the meeting, mandated activities had been undertaken under all nine areas of work,⁸ each of which covers a specific aspect of adaptation to climate change. The activities included the sharing of information and experience; discussing the current status and lessons learned in the various areas of work; and making recommendations on how to address identified gaps, needs, opportunities and constraints.

12. Participants first discussed the usefulness and appropriateness of the various modalities of implementing the Nairobi work programme, that is, inviting submissions from Parties and relevant organizations, preparing synthesis reports, establishing web-based information sources and holding workshops and expert meetings. Many participants agreed that submissions from Parties and relevant organizations provided a useful input to the workshops and expert meetings and served as a basis for an initial analysis of the most pertinent issues, especially in the early implementation of the Nairobi work programme. However, the value of this information sharing process has decreased over time as fewer Parties and organizations have submitted views and experiences. Many participants noted the heavy workload that comprehensive submissions imposed on Parties. It was therefore suggested to limit the number of submissions and to encourage Parties and organizations to make them more analytical. In this regard, some participants indicated the need for clear guidelines on what is expected to be included in future submissions.

13. Participants agreed that synthesis reports constitute a useful tool. However, some participants emphasized that these reports should have a broader input than just submissions and should include other relevant documentation in order to allow for a comprehensive analysis of the baselines for each area of work. In addition, the Nairobi work programme could be a means to enrich the assessment reports of the IPCC through sharing and considering knowledge and information contained in so-called 'grey literature' and obtained from practical adaptation-related experience.

14. Many participants felt that the workshops and expert meetings have been useful in enabling a dialogue between Parties, organizations, institutions and experts. For the second phase, there were calls to limit the number of workshops and meetings, given the time and resource constraints in the light of ongoing negotiation processes under the Convention, and for meetings to be more informal in order to enable an open dialogue.

15. Besides the existing modalities of the mandated activities, participants stressed that there is a need to consider new modalities during the second phase to enhance expert input during the implementation of the Nairobi work programme.

16. Many participants emphasized that activities completed under the nine areas of work during the first phase of the Nairobi work programme resulted in the collection and generation of knowledge and information, and thus contributed mainly to the first part of the objective of the work programme, which is to assist Parties to improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation. Building upon the first phase, several participants proposed that the second phase of the Nairobi work programme should focus on activities aimed at meeting the second part of the objective, which is to assist Parties to make informed decisions on practical adaptation actions and measures.

17. Many participants proposed to review the recommendations contained in the reports on the workshops and expert meetings held under the work programme and to consider which of those could be addressed by the SBSTA, including through activities during the second phase of the Nairobi work programme; by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI); and by other organizations and

⁸ The nine areas of work are (1) Methods and tools, (2) Data and observations, (3) Climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling, (4) Climate-related risks and extreme events, (5) Socio-economic information, (6) Adaptation planning and practices, (7) Research, (8) Technologies for adaptation and (9) Economic diversification.

institutions. To facilitate the urgent implementation of the recommendations, participants requested the secretariat to engage relevant organizations and institutions in undertaking some of the proposed activities in order to support Parties. Participants further encouraged the Chair of the SBSTA to identify recommendations for consideration by the SBI under appropriate agenda items.

18. Participants recalled the scope of work as contained in decision 2/CP.11, which identifies two thematic areas – impacts and vulnerability, and adaptation planning, measures and actions – each with several action-oriented sub-themes; they stressed that these should be taken into account when considering further activities. With regard to activities in the second phase, it was suggested that the nine areas of work be continued, with a focus on adaptation planning and practices and on economic diversification.

19. In the implementation of further activities, participants proposed to focus more on sectors and on livelihoods. Besides agriculture and food security, water resources, coastal zones and health, some participants suggested that additional sectors such as transportation, infrastructure and industry be considered when undertaking further activities.

20. A number of activities were proposed to be undertaken during the second phase of the work programme, either by the SBSTA or by relevant organizations and institutions. The activities include:

- (a) Analysis of the costs of climate change impacts and the costs and benefits of adaptation practices, in non-monetary as well as in monetary terms, with a view to identifying the range of adaptation options and to avoiding maladaptation;
- (b) Providing guidance on national adaptation planning, for example through considering the integration of community-based approaches with top-down planning approaches. The national adaptation programme of action process could be examined to identify good practices and lessons learned and to review adaptation practices and the enabling environments in which they were implemented;
- (c) Analysis of economic diversification as a means to increase resilience to climate change impacts, for example through a workshop;
- (d) Overview of innovative risk-sharing and transfer mechanisms such as insurance, for example through a technical paper;
- (e) Advancement of vulnerability mapping and profiling, combining climatic with socio-economic data, to facilitate the prioritization of adaptation action at various levels;
- (f) Development of vulnerability indices to serve as benchmarks in monitoring and evaluating adaptation planning and practices;
- (g) Capacity-building in developing countries to enable research on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation at local level.

21. There were calls for outcomes of further activities to be more policy-relevant and to establish stronger links with work undertaken under the SBI and under other SBSTA agenda items such as research and technology transfer as well as the work of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group. Some participants proposed that indicators be developed to evaluate the extent to which the Nairobi work programme will have achieved its objective and expected outcomes.

B. Engagement of organizations, institutions, experts, communities and the private sector in the activities of the Nairobi work programme

22. The successful implementation of the Nairobi work programme depends to a large degree on involving organizations and stakeholders active in adaptation at all levels and in all sectors. To this end, the SBSTA had requested the secretariat to strive to engage a wide range of organizations, institutions, experts and communities in the implementation of the work programme and had urged them to undertake their own activities in support of the objective and expected outcomes identified in decision 2/CP.11.

23. Participants noted the efforts of the secretariat in this regard, which included encouraging relevant organizations and institutions to nominate a special focal point with whom the secretariat could liaise on activities; organizing a forum with focal points of engaged organizations and institutions at the margins of the thirteenth session of the COP; and convening small technical preparatory meetings for the areas of work.

24. In addition, the secretariat, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, had developed preliminary Calls for Action⁹ in order to better communicate, to all relevant stakeholders, recommendations to address gaps and needs identified at the workshops and expert meetings. Participants agreed that the Calls for Action could constitute a useful tool for stimulating a large number of activities by organizations in support of Parties, in particular developing countries.

25. Participants welcomed the work of those organizations and institutions that have increasingly committed themselves to undertake activities under the Nairobi work programme, as reflected in their submissions, concept notes and Action Pledges.¹⁰ Pledged activities span all nine areas of work and include developing and disseminating tools to evaluate and reduce agricultural risks; piloting projects on the uses of plant genetic resources; and educating and training vulnerability and adaptation researchers and practitioners.

26. For the second phase of the Nairobi work programme, participants agreed to continue and enhance the engagement of organizations, institutions, experts and communities through existing as well as additional means and to encourage them to undertake their own activities, including in the form of Action Pledges. Participants encouraged those active in supporting Parties in their adaptation work to periodically inform the SBSTA on the results achieved. Several participants stressed that there is a need to expand the engagement of organizations to include smaller ones and those active at community level, as well as to enhance the participation of educational institutions.

27. Many participants encouraged a stronger engagement of the private sector, given its wide reach across sectors and levels. The work of the private sector was seen to have the potential to greatly enhance the reach of activities and outputs under the Nairobi work programme.

28. In order to stimulate more action at national and regional levels, some participants proposed to engage organizations and institutions with national and regional representation, such as FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, UN/ISDR, WMO and regional climate centres, to undertake specific activities to support the Nairobi work programme at those levels.

29. Participants agreed that the Calls for Action would benefit from a general endorsement by Parties in order to make them more useful and likely to be taken up by organizations and institutions. Participants suggested agreeing on a common format for these Calls for Action so that the secretariat, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, can prepare them without necessarily consulting the SBSTA on each one. Participants requested the secretariat to prepare examples of Calls for Action

⁹ Examples of Calls for Action can be found at <<http://unfccc.int/4087.php>>.

¹⁰ Examples of Action Pledges can be found at <<http://unfccc.int/3996.php>>.

taking into account the discussions at the meeting, to solicit feedback from Parties and to further refine the Calls for Action.

30. In terms of the format, participants proposed that the Calls for Action be based on agreed language of the sub-themes contained in the annex to decision 2/CP.11. In addition, the Calls for Action should be clearly linked to recommendations from the workshops and expert meetings and related information such as submissions from Parties to enable the identification of the rationale and the sources for the Calls for Action.

31. Some participants recalled previous discussions on the establishment of a group of experts on adaptation. They noted that such a group could facilitate the implementation of the Nairobi work programme and proposed that establishing such a group should be reconsidered at SBSTA 29.

C. Dissemination of outputs of the Nairobi work programme

32. Participants recalled that the SBSTA had agreed that the deliverables resulting from the implementation of the Nairobi work programme should be widely disseminated to relevant stakeholders, including by the secretariat.

33. The secretariat informed participants of its efforts in this regard. These efforts included dissemination of information on the current status of the areas of work, including lessons learned, gaps and needs, through miscellaneous documents, synthesis reports and online databases and interfaces, and dissemination of recommendations on how to address the gaps and needs through meeting reports and Calls for Action.

34. To reach a wide range of stakeholders, the secretariat developed brochures that introduced the work programme and detailed progress in its implementation, and an electronic newsletter to update engaged organizations on progress in the implementation of the work programme. In addition, most of the workshops and expert meetings held under the Nairobi work programme were covered by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin – the reporting service of the International Institute for Sustainable Development – to ensure a wide dissemination of their discussions and results.

35. Participants welcomed the efforts by the secretariat and noted that there is a further need to capture the knowledge and information generated at the workshops and expert meetings and from activities taking place at local level. The background paper prepared for the meeting was seen as a good basis for the summary report that will consolidate the results of the implementation of the Nairobi work programme during its first phase, and will be made available to Parties and relevant organizations by SBSTA 29.

36. In order to enhance the dissemination of outputs during the second phase of the Nairobi work programme, participants proposed that the development of user-friendly outputs be enhanced and that the user-friendliness of the work programme web pages be further increased.

37. To expand the reach of the Nairobi work programme, in particular at national and local levels, participants proposed that information and knowledge generated by the work programme be packaged according to the needs of different stakeholders. They stressed the importance of engaging communications specialists to develop information strategies targeting stakeholders at different levels. In addition, many participants highlighted the need to translate the different outputs of the Nairobi work programme into other languages and to make use of audio-visual formats in order to reach more adaptation stakeholders.

38. Participants also highlighted the need to enhance outreach and foster a dialogue among adaptation stakeholders, including through developing interactive information resources, for example

upgrading the UNFCCC Compendium on methods and tools,¹¹ and to promote an exchange of Nairobi work programme information through existing adaptation networks. In this regard, it was suggested that outreach activities be coordinated with similar efforts, for example, the Climate Change Information Network¹² developed as part of the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention or the Adaptation Learning Mechanism¹³ developed by UNDP, which seeks to support countries in their adaptation planning.

IV. Issues for consideration for the second phase of the Nairobi work programme

39. In order to enhance the achievement of the objective and expected outcomes of the Nairobi work programme, participants proposed the following potential issues to be considered by the SBSTA at its twenty-eighth session for inclusion in the second phase:

- (a) Mandated activities, including:
 - (i) Continuing the nine areas of work and proposed further activities;
 - (ii) Promoting the implementation of recommendations resulting from the workshops and expert meetings in the context of the Convention, and by a wide range of organizations, institutions, experts and communities;
- (b) Engagement of organizations, institutions, experts, communities and the private sector, including:
 - (i) Continuing and enhancing the engagement, including through Action Pledges, with a view to assisting Parties in achieving the objective and expected outcomes of the Nairobi work programme;
 - (ii) Continuing and refining the development of Calls for Action in accordance with the views of Parties;
 - (iii) Exploring, with Nairobi work programme partners that have national and regional representation, the development of specific Nairobi work programme activities at those levels;
- (c) Dissemination of outputs of completed activities, including:
 - (i) Continuing the development of user-friendly Nairobi work programme outputs and web pages, including through packaging and translating outputs;
 - (ii) Enhancing outreach and fostering a dialogue among adaptation stakeholders;
 - (iii) Promoting an exchange of Nairobi work programme information through existing adaptation networks.

40. Participants noted the need to enhance the complementarity between the Nairobi work programme and other adaptation-related activities under the Convention, including adaptation work under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and under adaptation-related agenda items of the SBI. Some participants suggested that relevant information or

¹¹ <<http://unfccc.int/2674.php>>.

¹² <<http://unfccc.int/3514.php>>.

¹³ A preliminary version is available at <<http://www.adaptationlearning.net>>.

other possible outputs arising from the Nairobi work programme could be provided to the Adaptation Fund Board to facilitate its work, if requested.

41. Finally, participants encouraged the Chair to consider ways and means to expedite the identification of further activities at SBSTA 28 with a view to continuing the implementation of the Nairobi work programme without any disruptions.
