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Five-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

**Report of the informal meeting on the five-year programme of work of the
Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice on impacts,
vulnerability and adaptation to climate change**

Note by the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice*

Summary

This note provides information on the informal meeting of Parties organized by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) in order to further elaborate the draft indicative list of activities of the five-year programme of work of the SBSTA on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

In the view of the Chair of the SBSTA, this note presents the common understanding of the initial activities of the programme of work that emerged from the discussion at the meeting. The SBSTA may wish to consider this information with a view to identifying the initial activities starting in 2006.

* The document was submitted late for translation due to the fact that it was only possible to hold the meeting from 13 to 15 March 2006.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 2/CP.11¹, adopted the five-year programme of work of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. It requested the SBSTA to start the implementation of the programme of work by undertaking the initial activities specified by the SBSTA at its twenty-third session, and to consider and further elaborate, at its twenty-fourth session, additional activities based on the draft indicative list of activities contained in the annex to the final report of the SBSTA on its twenty-third session.²

2. The COP also requested the SBSTA to consider, at its twenty-eighth session (June 2008), further activities as well as appropriate timing and modalities for their inclusion in the programme of work based on the results of the initial activities, information presented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other new scientific information, as well as relevant activities undertaken by international and regional institutions.

3. The SBSTA requested the secretariat to organize, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, an informal meeting of representatives from Parties before its twenty-fourth session in order to further elaborate the above-mentioned list. The SBSTA agreed to consider the outcome of this meeting at its twenty-fourth session, with a view to identifying the activities starting as of 2006.

B. Scope of the note

4. This note provides information on the informal meeting organized by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA in response to the above mandate. In the view of the Chair of the SBSTA, the information contained in the chapter III of this note, including tables 1 and 2, presents the common understanding of the initial activities of the programme of work that emerged from the discussion at the meeting.

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

5. The SBSTA may wish to consider the information contained in this note, in particular in table 1, with the aim of completing the identification of initial activities of the programme of work (including appropriate modalities and timing for their implementation) to be started as of 2006.

II. Proceedings and workshop summary

6. The meeting was held in Vienna, Austria, from 13 to 15 March 2006 with support from the Governments of Austria, Sweden and Switzerland. Thirty participants, 16 from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) and 14 from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties), took part in the meeting.³ Participants were provided with the background information prepared by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA to focus the discussion. The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the SBSTA, Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh (Trinidad and Tobago), assisted by Ms. Helen Plume (New Zealand) who acted as facilitator in some of the sessions.

¹ FCCC/CP/2005/5/Add.1.

² FCCC/2005/SBSTA/10, paragraphs 18–19 and annex I.

³ <http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/application/pdf/lop_150306.pdf> Two more Parties were invited but were not able to attend the meeting.

7. The COP, by requesting the SBSTA to consider, at its twenty–eighth session, further activities as well as appropriate timing and modalities for their inclusion in the programme of work based on the results of the initial activities, provided an intermediate benchmark in the five-year period of the programme of work for consideration of initial activities. The participants agreed to use this benchmark to frame the time line for initial activities of the programme of work. These possible initial activities, timing, and modalities were compiled on the basis of decision 2/CP.11, the draft indicative list of activities, background information on related previous activities provided by the secretariat, and discussions on this matter at SBSTA 23. In developing the list of initial activities as presented in chapter III below, participants took into account that:

- (a) The objective of the programme of work is to assist Parties 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;
- (b) Initial activities should incorporate ongoing relevant work of the SBSTA, of which the programme of work can take advantage and to which it can add value;
- (c) The workload for two years, for the SBSTA and the secretariat, should be practical and realistic;
- (d) Activities should start immediately after SBSTA 24 and should allow flexibility in their scope, depending on their initial results;
- (e) Further activities would be considered at the twenty–eighth session of the SBSTA based on the experiences gained and results of the initial activities and other materials, as referred to in decision 2/CP.11;
- (f) According to decision 2/CP.11, the expected outcome of the programme of work targeting “international, regional, national, sectoral and local levels”, as well as “Parties, relevant organizations, business, civil society, and decision makers”, highlights the need to address different target audiences for the deliverables and input from other processes within and outside the UNFCCC;
- (g) Initial activities should enable broad involvement of appropriate organizations and institutions to enhance the usefulness and impact of these activities for all target audiences;
- (h) Where practical, activities from the draft indicative list should be combined to allow for streamlining and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.

III. Summary of the initial activities

8. As a result of the discussion, the participants streamlined the draft indicative list and developed a list of initial activities of the programme of work. Table 1 provides specific details of each activity, the modality and timing of implementation, anticipated deliverables and target audience.

9. Participants proposed nine initial activities, as follows:

- (a) Activity 1 (Methods and tools) that combines activities under sub-themes A (i) and B (i)⁴ extends the work on methods and tools for impact and vulnerability assessments into the

⁴ All references to sub-themes in this note refer to those of the five-year program of work of the SBSTA on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change adopted by decision 2/CP.11.

next generation of tools for adaptation planning, measures and actions, as well as integration with sustainable development. This activity focuses on three main aspects: development of methods and tools for impact and vulnerability assessment, development of methods and tools for adaptation planning, measures and actions, and dissemination of the above methods and tools;

- (b) Activity 2 (Data and observations) under sub-theme A (ii) builds on previous and ongoing activities in the area of data and observations. A new point of departure here is to consider information and data that are more focused on target audience and main stakeholders relating to assessing climate impacts and vulnerability and preparing for adaptation, observation of impacts and taking into account past experiences in dealing with climate change impacts;
- (c) Activity 3 (Climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling) under sub-theme A (iii) focuses on the issues relating to climate models, their regional applications and applicability for different users and tasks;
- (d) Activity 4 (Climate related risks and extreme events) under sub-theme A (iv) focuses on promoting analysis of climate variability and other climate related risks, including extreme events associated with climate change, predictability of extreme events, thresholds in impacts, and sharing experience in climate change risk assessment and management;
- (e) Activity 5 (Socio-economic information) under sub-theme A (v) refers to a wide set of socio-economic information, including specific information for developing socio-economic scenarios, assessing of vulnerability, and costing adaptation;
- (f) Activity 6 (Adaptation planning and practices) combining relevant activities under sub-themes A (iv), B (ii) and B (iv) suggests work that would draw upon the experience of practitioners, professionals and expert groups at the international level who are concerned with incorporating climate risks into their ongoing work and advisory roles. It also recognizes the need for a broad sharing of knowledge, including traditional knowledge, and experience on understanding of climate change risks and adaptation in specific areas and/or sectors (such as water, agriculture, health, sea level rise, etc.);
- (g) Activity 7 (Research) under sub-themes B (iii) and A (iv), and activity 8 (Technologies for adaptation) under sub-theme B (iii) build on existing work of the SBSTA on research and technology transfer, and open the door to a more creative approach to informing the UNFCCC process about research in the area of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, technology for adaptation, and know-how, as well as on relatively new areas for the SBSTA, such as insurance mechanisms for adaptation. A variety of new initiatives and approaches might emerge from this activity, given the work being done in the private sector;
- (h) Activity 9 (Economic diversification) under sub theme B (v) considers such issues as economic diversification, aimed at increasing economic resilience and reducing reliance on vulnerable economic sectors for different countries.

10. Modalities shown in table 1 include those listed in the annex to decision 2/CP.11 in paragraph 6. Inputs which might be requested from expert groups under the Convention, i.e. Consultative Group of Experts (CGE), Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT), relate to provision of information on activities which have already been undertaken by those groups as part of their respective mandated programmes of work (for example, assessments and

compilation and synthesis of national communications, national adaptation programmes of actions (NAPAs), technology needs assessments (TNAs)). This information would be a valuable input for the programme of work and its use would avoid repetition of work.

11. The timing of the activities takes into account the need for even distribution of activities over the two-year period, the timing of ongoing work and the expected time for obtaining deliverables. A summary of time lines is presented in table 2.

12. Deliverables, such as technical, synthesis and workshop reports, would be made available to the target audience in different ways. The summary progress reports to the SBSTA, to be prepared by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, would provide concise information on the main results of the activities undertaken, for further guidance of the SBSTA, including the possibility of forwarding certain issues for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the COP. Technical and specific deliverables would be tailored for immediate use by the target audience and would not necessarily be presented for consideration of the SBSTA, unless specifically requested. This approach of focusing on direct delivery to relevant audiences would allow the programme to meet its objective.

13. The target audiences shown in table 1 refer to broad categories of possible stakeholders and actors who could benefit from the activities of the programme of work and contribute to their implementation. The list of target audiences in the table is indicative; it does not preclude other audiences from using the deliverables or becoming involved in the activities.

14. Relevant organizations and institutions which may become involved in the specific activities under the categories of the target audiences were not specified at the informal meeting pending the consideration of the initial list of organizations and institutions active in areas relevant to the programme of work prepared by the secretariat as mandated by SBSTA at its twenty-third session.⁵ It is expected that Parties will provide further guidance to the secretariat at the twenty-fourth session of the SBSTA on how to approach and engage organizations and institutions in the implementation of the programme of work.

⁵ See also FCCC/SBSTA/2006/INF.3.

<i>Sub-theme A (ii). Improving collection, management, exchange, access to and use of observational data and other relevant information on current and historical climate and its impacts, and promoting improvement of observations, including the monitoring of climate variability</i>				
2. Data and observations				
a. Reinforcement of SBSTA work on systematic observation (including Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) Implementation Plan and regional workshops programme), focusing on issues relating to impacts, vulnerability and adaptation taking into account stakeholder data needs and needs to enhance capacity to supply and use the data especially at the regional level	a. Include consideration of relevant aspects of this activity, in particular stakeholder data and observation needs, at the expert meeting referred to under the modalities of activity 1	Before SBSTA 27	a. Inclusion of relevant information in the report from the expert meeting referred to under the modalities of activity 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties • Policymakers • Stakeholders involved in issues on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation
	b. Invite the GCOS secretariat to focus specifically on issues under this activity in its reports on the implementation of the GCOS Implementation Plan and the report on the regional workshop programme at SBSTA 25	SBSTA 25	b. GCOS progress report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCOS and its partner organizations
	c. Invite the GCOS and its partner organizations to explore how their work could contribute more to the work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, including the identification of gaps and deficiencies and steps which are put in place, planned or recommended to address these deficiencies, focusing on regions which were identified by the GCOS as not providing observational data	SBSTA 27	c. Report by the GCOS secretariat on needs, and gaps and ways to address them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional observation centres
b. Exchange of information on observed climate change impacts, including those observed through traditional knowledge	d. Encourage Parties to share information on observed impacts of climate change, including through national communications and participation in relevant scientific activities such as those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	SBSTA 25	d. Information on observed impacts of climate change included in the compilation and synthesis of national communications	

<i>Sub-theme A (iii). Promoting the development of, access to, and use of information and data on projected climate change</i>						
<p>3. Climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling</p> <p>a. Identification of gaps in, and means to improve, the development of and access to regional climate scenarios and models, including downscaling data</p> <p>b. Identification of practical opportunities to improve access to, and use of different models' outputs, including assessment of their applicability and training opportunities</p>	a.	Include consideration of relevant aspects of this activity at the expert meeting referred to under the modalities of activity 1	Before SBSTA 27	a.	Inclusion of relevant information in the report from the expert meeting referred to under the modalities of activity 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties • National teams for impacts, vulnerability and adaptation assessment • Regional and national modelling centres • Users of the information on models • UNDP NCSP and other organizations involved in support of developing national communications
	b.	Invite inputs from the CGE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) National Communication Support Programme (NCSP) and other relevant organizations on matters identified in this activity	SBSTA 26	b.	Technical report to be made available to the target audience. Summary progress report on activity 3 to be presented at SBSTA 28 for further guidance	
	c.	Invite the IPCC and its task group on scenarios for climate impact assessment (TGICA), other international organizations, modelling centres, and regional and national agencies with relevant experience, to provide information on their products and services on matters identified in this activity	SBSTA 26			
	d.	Request the secretariat to prepare a technical report taking into account the results of b and c above as well as any relevant outcome from regional workshops under decision 1/CP.10	SBSTA 27			

Sub-theme A (iv). Promoting understanding of impacts of, and vulnerability to, climate change, current and future climate variability and extreme events, and the implications for sustainable development

Sub-theme B (ii). Collecting, analysing and disseminating information on past and current practical adaptation actions and measures, including adaptation projects, short- and long-term adaptation strategies, and local and indigenous knowledge

Sub-theme B (iv). Facilitating communication and cooperation among and between Parties and relevant organizations, business, civil society, and decision makers, and other stakeholders

<p>6. Adaptation planning and practices</p> <p>a. Exchange of information on experiences, lessons learned, constraints and barriers of past and current adaptation measures and actions, and the implications for sustainable development</p> <p>b. Promotion of different ways and means for information sharing and for the enhancement of cooperation among Parties and relevant institutions and communities</p> <p>c. Promotion of understanding of response strategies, including early warning systems, local coping strategies and lessons learned that can be applied elsewhere</p>	<p>a. Invite inputs from Parties and relevant organizations through structured submissions on innovative adaptation approaches and practices undertaken at the regional, national and local levels in different sectors, as well as on needs and concerns</p> <p>b. Request the secretariat to make the inputs available on the UNFCCC website</p> <p>c. Request the secretariat to prepare a synthesis report based on submissions from Parties</p> <p>d. Invite inputs from the LEG, CGE and EGTT on matters identified in this activity</p> <p>e. Provide a forum for the exchange of information on the contribution of traditional knowledge to the work on impacts and vulnerability assessment and adaptation</p> <p>f. Considering the synthesis report and inputs from the LEG, CGE and EGTT, the SBSTA to decide upon possible follow-up activities, including workshop(s), publications and a web-based information interface</p>	<p>Before SBSTA 25</p> <p>Before SBSTA 26</p> <p>Before SBSTA 26</p> <p>Before SBSTA 25</p> <p>As of SBSTA 26</p> <p>SBSTA 27</p>	<p>Information on the website and synthesis paper, summary progress report on this activity to be presented at SBSTA 28 for further guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties • Adaptation practitioners at the community level • Relevant sectoral and thematic communities, including development cooperation community • Policymakers at different levels • Disaster risk reduction community • Regional and other organizations specialized on hazards/ extreme events
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<i>Sub-theme B (iii). Promoting research on adaptation options and the development and diffusion of technologies, know-how and practices for adaptation, particularly addressing identified adaptation priorities and building on lessons learned from current adaptation projects and strategies</i>				
7. Research Analysis of opportunities and ways to promote research and development of adaptive capacities and adaptation practices that increase resilience	a. Consider the conclusions from SBSTA 24 and the outcome of the side event on research needs relevant to the Convention b. Request that this activity be considered in future work under the agenda item on the research and systematic observation c. Request the secretariat to extract and synthesize information on ongoing and planned adaptation research as well as research needs identified in submissions from Parties and relevant organizations under this activity	SBSTA 24 Before SBSTA 26	a. Synthesis paper on adaptation research needs b. Compilation of adaptation research identified in submissions from Parties and relevant organizations under this activity c. Summary progress report to be presented at SBSTA 28 for further guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties • Relevant international research organizations • Users of research
8. Technologies for adaptation Enhancement of work on different aspects of technologies and know-how for adaptation, as well as on opportunities for their transfer and diffusion, taking into account local and indigenous knowledge as well as ongoing activities and projects	a. The SBSTA to consider the recommendations of the EGTT on the technical paper on technology for adaptation and the outcome of the SBSTA 25 EGTT side event, the synthesis of technology needs assessments for adaptation, and previous work relating to adaptation technologies in the national adaptation programme of actions, and to decide upon possible follow-up activities under the programme of work on adaptation b. Request the secretariat to extract and synthesize examples of adaptation technologies identified in submissions from Parties and relevant organizations under activity 6	SBSTA 26 Before SBSTA 26	a. Compilation paper on adaptation technologies identified in submissions from Parties and relevant organizations under activity 6 b. Summary progress report on this activity to be presented at SBSTA 28 for further guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties • Convention expert groups • Users of technologies for adaptation
<i>Sub-theme B (v). Promoting understanding and the development and dissemination of measures, methodologies and tools, including for economic diversification, aimed at increasing economic resilience and reducing reliance on vulnerable economic sectors, especially for the relevant categories of countries listed in Article 4, paragraph 8, of the Convention</i>				
9. Economic diversification Exchange of experiences and opportunities on the development and dissemination of measures, methodologies and tools aimed at increasing economic resilience	c. Invite Parties and relevant organizations to provide information on examples of measures to increase economic resilience of vulnerable sectors d. Request the secretariat to prepare a synthesis report	SBSTA 26 Before SBSTA 27	a. Synthesis report. b. Summary progress report on this activity to be presented at SBSTA 28 for further guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties • Relevant organizations and stakeholders

Table 2. Overview and time line for implementation for initial activities for the period SBSTA 24 (May 2006) to SBSTA 28 (June 2008)

Year		2006		2007		2008
Session		24	25	26	27	28
1	Methods and tools		Submissions from Parties and expert groups Submissions from relevant organizations	Synthesis report Miscellaneous document		Expert meeting ^a Summary progress report
2	Data and observations		Report from GCOS ^b Sharing of information		Report from GCOS and partner organizations	
3	Climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling			Submissions from relevant organizations	Technical report	Summary progress report
4	Climate related risks and extreme events			Workshop ^a	Shared in-session side event	Synthesis report Summary progress report
5	Socio-economic data		Submissions from Parties and relevant organizations	Synthesis report		Expert meeting ^a Summary progress report
6	Adaptation planning and practices		Submissions from Parties, relevant organizations and expert groups ^a	Inputs online ^a Synthesis report ^a Forum on Traditional Knowledge	SBSTA decision on possible follow-up activities	Summary progress report
7	Research	Special side event ^b	Synthesis of information ^b	Compilation paper on adaptation research		Summary progress report
8	Technologies for adaptation		Report from EGTT ^b Side event ^b	Compilation paper on adaptation technologies SBSTA decision on possible follow-up activities		Summary progress report
9	Economic diversification			Submissions from Parties and relevant organizations	Synthesis report ^a	Summary progress report
	Summary	1 side event Initial consideration of a list of organizations	3 reports/synthesis 1 side event	2 workshop/forum 3 synthesis reports 2 compilation papers 1 miscellaneous document	1 side event 3 synthesis/technical reports	2 expert meeting 1 synthesis reports 8 summary progress reports

^a Activities that are planned to take place before that particular session.

^b Activities that have been already mandated and for which the work is under way.