



UNITED
NATIONS



**Framework Convention
on Climate Change**

Distr.
GENERAL

FCCC/SBSTA/2008/10
7 October 2008

Original: ENGLISH

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Twenty-ninth session

Poznan, 1–10 December 2008

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

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

**Lessons learned in involving experts in the implementation of the
Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation
to climate change**

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

Experts have been involved in all activities of the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, from mandated submissions and workshops to activities aiming to catalyse new and innovative adaptation action. This document assesses their involvement. Lessons learned relate to the continuation and enhancement of participation of experts from Parties and organizations, as well as individual experts. The assessment also indicates that participation of experts should remain flexible and that the pool of experts from which the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice draws should continue to grow, in terms of the number of experts and the range of areas covered.

* This document was submitted after the due date owing to other competing mandated tasks.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. INTRODUCTION	1–7	3
A. Mandate	1	3
B. Background.....	2–4	3
C. Scope of the note	5	3
D. Approach	6–7	4
II. LESSONS LEARNED IN INVOLVING EXPERTS.....	8–35	4
A. Involvement of experts through activities of Parties, organizations and expert groups under the Convention	8–25	4
B. Direct involvement of experts in mandated workshops and expert meetings	26–35	7
III. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF EXPERTS		
How can the role of experts be further defined and administered to maximize value?	36–43	9
IV. CONCLUSIONS	44–48	10

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its twenty-seventh session, requested the secretariat to prepare a report on lessons learned in involving experts in the implementation of the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change for consideration at its twenty-ninth session.¹

B. Background

2. 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.

3. The expected outcomes of the Nairobi work programme are:²

- (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.

4. The successful implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Nairobi work programme depend to a large degree on involving experts, organizations and stakeholders active in adaptation at all levels and in all sectors. The SBSTA thus requested the secretariat to strive to engage a wide range of organizations, institutions, experts and communities in the implementation of the Nairobi work programme.

C. Scope of the note

5. The objective of this note is to review the participation of experts in the Nairobi work programme, both in mandated activities and in activities targeted at catalysing new and innovative adaptation action, and to assess how the involvement of experts has contributed to the achievement of the overall objective of the Nairobi work programme.

¹ FCCC/SBSTA/2007/16, paragraph 21.

² Decision 2/CP.11, annex.

D. Approach

6. An assessment was made of the manner in which experts have been engaged in the Nairobi work programme to date. It was carried out by reviewing ways in which experts have been involved in the work programme, as well as through an analysis of UNFCCC documents: SBSTA conclusions, submissions, and reports of mandated expert meetings and workshops.
7. Experts have mainly been involved in the Nairobi work programme in two ways:
 - (a) By contributing to mandated submissions to the secretariat from Parties and organizations, as well as other relevant inputs from organizations, such as action pledges, concept notes and results of their own work, and through general participation in workshops and expert meetings;
 - (b) By direct involvement in the preparation and running of mandated workshops and expert meetings, in particular by participating in their deliberations and outcomes, giving presentations, facilitating breakout groups, preparing background and synthesis papers, and providing other technical support.

II. Lessons learned in involving experts

A. Involvement of experts through activities of Parties, organizations and expert groups under the Convention

1. Submissions mandated by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

8. Submissions were requested by the SBSTA under seven areas of work in the first phase of the Nairobi work programme.³ Up to the twenty-eighth session of the SBSTA, 23 Parties⁴ and 25 organizations and institutions had shared their knowledge and views through submissions. The highly technical character of the content of most of these submissions indicates a broad participation of experts in their preparation. In some cases individual submissions reflected experiences of a large group of Parties. The submissions have benefited greatly from this expert input, resulting in a wealth of useful information containing national and institutional experience, and descriptions of ongoing and completed activities benefiting the users of this information.

9. Submissions were received from Parties from different regions and with differing national circumstances, and from a range of United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, leading to the dissemination of broad and diverse expertise. An overview of submissions, and other relevant documentation prepared during the first phase of the Nairobi work programme, can be found in document FCCC/SBSTA/2008/6, annex I.

10. There were more submissions on certain areas of work of the Nairobi work programme, such as “climate-related risks and extreme events” and “adaptation planning and practices”, than on others, for example, “data and observations”, “economic diversification” and “socio-economic information”. In the “data and observations” area of work, the relatively small number of submissions received from the few key organizations in the field, could be interpreted as a reflection of the centralized nature of such work. For socio-economic information and economic diversification, the relatively low number of submissions could represent a lack of experts in this field, a lack of experts in this field who are aware of the

³ The first phase of the Nairobi work programme was concluded at SBSTA 28. Document FCCC/SBSTA/2008/12 contains a summary of the results of the first phase.

⁴ Including those acting on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the European Community and its member States.

UNFCCC process on adaptation, or a lack of understanding of the kind of information that the SBSTA was seeking.

2. Engagement of organizations

Preparatory meetings

11. The secretariat organized technical preparatory meetings with experts from specialized organizations and institutions with the purpose of brainstorming on the areas of work of the Nairobi work programme. These meetings were held between February 2007 and February 2008 on climate-related risks and extreme events; adaptation planning and practices; socio-economic information; economic diversification; methods and tools; and data and observations. They have contributed to the organization of workshops and expert meetings as well as to the further engagement of organizations, institutions and experts in the Nairobi work programme.

12. During these meetings, the question of how to maximize the potential of activities under the different areas of work was considered. A question and answer session was included in each meeting to help organizations better understand the Nairobi work programme and its objectives, as well as the initiatives put in place by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA. Experts were also provided information on the mandates of the SBSTA and the secretariat's work in fulfilling these mandates.

13. The informal nature and small size of these meetings encouraged free exchange of information, conception of new ideas and networking among the experts, which will help their organizations to better support the implementation of the Nairobi work programme. Many of these experts stated their willingness to provide expertise on relevant activities at a later date.

14. Experts from organizations were often willing to attend the preparatory meetings and share their expertise without additional cost because meetings were held in conjunction with larger events on similar topics, and many experts were already gathered in one place. This resulted in an efficient use of resources and the participation of experts who had previously discussed similar issues.

Workshops and expert meetings

15. Expertise was brought to the mandated workshops and expert meetings by the Parties and organizations that participated. Participation of organizations at Nairobi work programme workshops and expert meetings was high (see para. 26 below), and the range of organizations was diverse. Representatives of many partner organizations of the Nairobi work programme were present, such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and were all active contributors. Many organizations new to the UNFCCC process also participated in the workshops and enriched the discussions.

16. Collaboration with key stakeholders on the organization of the workshops ensured that technical knowledge offered by these organizations was also included. The adaptation planning and practices workshop was organized in collaboration with FAO, and the methods and tools and data and observations expert meetings were organized in collaboration with WMO. In this way, the activities of the Nairobi work programme have benefited from the extensive expertise of the experts that these organizations provided.

Action pledges and calls for action

17. An initiative which relies heavily on the expertise of those involved in the Nairobi work programme is that of action pledges. Organizations publicly commit to undertake their own activities geared towards the objectives of the Nairobi work programme, under a specific area of work. This was encouraged by the SBSTA at its twenty-fifth session.⁵ Action pledges provide a means to engage organizations that would not have otherwise been involved in the Nairobi work programme. At the same time, defining and implementing action pledges requires the active participation of experts in these organizations.

18. Many action pledges have been stimulated by calls for action prepared by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA. The main content of calls for action is based on recommendations resulting from the collective discussions of experts from Parties and organizations participating in mandated workshops and expert meetings. At the time of publication of this document, 60 action pledges had been received from 19 organizations.

Focal point forum

19. On initiation of the Nairobi work programme, the secretariat contacted relevant organizations to inform them of the programme and of the conclusions of the SBSTA referred to in paragraph 17 above that urged them to undertake their own activities in support of the objective and themes identified in decision 2/CP.11, and to share the outcomes with the SBSTA, as appropriate. Heads of organizations were asked to nominate a focal point that the secretariat could communicate with on a regular and informal basis. United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations were contacted, followed by international non-governmental organizations. Other organizations were also contacted as it became known that their work was relevant to the Nairobi work programme.

20. At the time of publication of this document, 121 organizations had nominated focal points. Many of these organizations are new to the UNFCCC process and vary in their geographical location, scale and scope of work. Engaging organizations in the Nairobi work programme provides a new source of technical expertise, while increasing awareness of Parties' needs and adaptation activities being carried out under the UNFCCC. The engagement in the Nairobi work programme also increases the visibility of organizations and institutions that Parties may turn to.

21. A network is forming among these organizations through their focal points, many of whom attended the preparatory meetings, mandated workshops and expert meetings, as well as the first focal point forum. This was held at the thirteenth session of the COP, in Bali, in December 2007 and was attended by 42 focal points. During this forum, they discussed the state and future evolution of the Nairobi work programme, and exchanged information on ways in which their organizations are contributing to it.

22. The forum was an excellent opportunity for interdisciplinary networking because of the range of organizations that attended. The areas of the work programme are so diverse that experts in just about every aspect of adaptation to climate change can be involved by their organizations in the activities. The SBSTA, at its twenty-eighth session, mandated the secretariat to hold such forums on a regular basis.⁶

Expert groups under the Convention

23. Expert input to the mandated activities was also provided through expert groups under the Convention, namely the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), the Consultative Group of

⁵ FCCC/SBSTA/2006/11, paragraph 17.

⁶ FCCC/SBSTA/2008/6, paragraph 29.

Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT). The LEG provides advice to least developed country (LDC) Parties on the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action. The Chair of the LEG has expressed the group's readiness to support non-LDC Parties in developing adaptation plans. The CGE provides technical advice and support through hands-on training and examination of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties) in the area of tools, methodologies and processes for vulnerability and adaptation assessments. The EGTT provides technical advice and guidance on technologies for adaptation in order to improve understanding of, and identify prioritized needs for, these technologies. It also seeks to improve the process of technology development and transfer, as relevant to adaptation.

24. The activities of these groups relevant to the Nairobi work programme have been initiated in response to mandates that predate it. But expert groups have also responded to the Nairobi work programme by adding it to their regular agendas and by discussing how they can contribute towards the objective of the work programme. To that effect, the EGTT, for example, held an expert meeting in April 2008 specifically focused on the Nairobi work programme.⁷

25. The participation of the expert groups in Nairobi work programme activities ensured that these activities did not duplicate work being done elsewhere, and enabled the work programme to benefit from the experience gained from work already carried out by these groups. Furthermore, it helped in identifying and developing ways to exploit possible future synergies between the Nairobi work programme and the work of the expert groups.

B. Direct involvement of experts in mandated workshops and expert meetings

1. Experts from Parties

26. So far, 114 representatives and experts from non-Annex I Parties and 48 from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) have participated in mandated technical workshops and expert meetings,⁸ as well as 150 representatives from 87 organizations, most of whom were experts on the subjects under consideration. Invitations were sent to Parties, aiming for appropriate regional and geographical balance, following the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA. The representatives from Parties were selected by their national focal points on the basis of their expertise in relation to the respective subjects of the mandated activities. The different national circumstances of the experts' countries added to the range of expertise, which has been instrumental for agreeing on recommendations resulting from mandated workshops and expert meetings. These recommendations are relevant to a large number of countries.

27. The participation of experts from Parties in the Nairobi work programme can be seen to have had three further major benefits. First, it has helped to enhance information sharing among experts from different Parties. Second, it has enabled Parties' decision makers to consider the experience and results of others in the implementation of national adaptation actions. Third, it has contributed to the formulation by Parties in UNFCCC negotiations of positions on adaptation that aim to pursue further action on adaptation at different levels.

2. Experts from organizations

28. Experts from a number of organizations and institutions and the private sector have actively participated in the implementation of mandated activities under the Nairobi work programme.

⁷ The report on this expert meeting is contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2008/4.

⁸ Participation in the in-session workshop on climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling, held during SBSTA 28, is not included.

Representatives from 87 organizations have participated in workshops and expert meetings to date, selected by their organizations on the basis of their expertise in the subject under discussion. As these experts came from United Nations organizations and other intergovernmental, regional, non-governmental and research organizations, universities and the private sector, the range of expertise available during these meetings was such that the recommendations that have come out of the workshops have been useful to a wide range of stakeholders at all levels.

29. The initiatives put in place by the secretariat, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, to catalyse new and innovative adaptation action in support of the Nairobi work programme, as well as the efforts to engage experts from organizations, have had additional benefits. Engaging a wide range of organizations, institutions, experts and communities has played a role in strengthening cooperation among them and in building networks, while the active participation of these experts has been an essential step towards implementation of the work programme.

3. Individual experts

30. In addition to drawing on the broad expertise provided by experts and representatives from Parties, organizations and the expert groups mentioned in paragraph 23 above, the secretariat has engaged individual experts to provide specific knowledge, based on their experience in the different areas of work, by contributing to background papers and notes, guiding discussions as facilitators and making technical presentations. A total of 57 individual experts, 31 from non-Annex I Parties and 26 from Annex I Parties, were invited to attend and support expert meetings and workshops during the first phase, and an additional eight experts were funded by Parties.

31. Experts were chosen on the basis of a number of criteria. The main criterion was expertise in the specific area being addressed by the activity. Sometimes a workshop or an expert meeting required facilitators. In other cases an activity required a broad understanding of the issues or highly technical and specific expertise. In general, a group of experts with a mix of the above strengths was brought together. Another high priority was to ensure regional balance among the experts. At each workshop or expert meeting, experts came from a range of countries and from different geographical regions.

32. The individual experts that attended were briefed by the secretariat via e-mail prior to the workshop on the role that they could play, in order to use their expertise most effectively. Their role was to facilitate consideration of the sectors and relevant topics in which they are specialized.

33. In general, the input provided by individual experts at workshops kept discussions focused and relevant. The involvement of individual experts, especially those with expertise in facilitation, led to innovative and productive sessions.

34. In some cases there were limitations with regard to the involvement of experts in Nairobi work programme activities. At times, experts were not available to participate in a workshop or expert meeting when it was planned. In these cases it was challenging to find suitable experts who could take on these roles. Often, experts were not able to devote a day for preparation prior to the workshop and consequently had to begin their work on the day of their arrival with no preparatory briefing, which limited the value of their initial contributions.

35. Expert participation in workshops and expert meetings could potentially be enhanced by involving experts in the initial design of the workshop in addition to its execution. Experts have requested earlier and more sustained communication with the secretariat regarding such activities. More effort could be made in assisting individual experts to better understand the mandates under the UNFCCC process in order to ensure that their input is consistent with the objectives of the mandated activities.

III. Suggestions for future involvement of experts

How can the role of experts be further defined and administered to maximize value?

36. Participation in the Nairobi work programme by experts from Parties and organizations and individual experts is already extensive. However, there is scope – and need – for enhancing this engagement.

37. A possible first step is to create a roster of experts specific to the Nairobi work programme and its areas of work. The range of areas of expertise covered by this roster should be as wide as possible. This can be done by updating, based on inputs from Parties and organizations, the existing UNFCCC roster, which currently includes 228 experts in vulnerability assessment, climate change and adaptation to climate change.⁹

38. Representatives and experts from Parties and organizations offer a wide range of experience and expertise, and the use of individual experts should be focused in areas where some specific knowledge is needed to perform certain tasks. A potential classification of these experts could be made, based on the purpose and nature of the support needed. For each expert, information should be gathered on the type of work through which he or she could offer the most valuable contribution to the Nairobi work programme. Individual experts could also be further grouped by the areas of work where they can be of most benefit. Experts may be grouped into more than one area of work, and this overlap exploited to create synergies between these areas.

39. The approach taken to involve experts in the Nairobi work programme is flexible. Currently, experts are asked to carry out a variety of tasks, from providing technical feedback on a particular matter to facilitating breakout groups at a series of workshops. Considering the benefits already gained from involving experts and the support of Parties for continuing to do so, as expressed in submissions and statements, it is important that the pool of experts for undertaking specific tasks is increased. It should also be noted that the number of mandated activities is expected to rise during the second phase of the work programme.

40. The approach should be double-pronged, increasing the pool of experts from organizations or individual experts as well as increasing the number of partner organizations to the Nairobi work programme. This will involve expanding the spheres in which the work programme is known and attracting new experts to the process, especially in the areas of work that have not been covered as well as some others to date.¹⁰

41. The SBSTA, at its twenty-eighth session, requested the secretariat to continue efforts to engage organizations, institutions, experts, communities and members of the private sector in the implementation of the Nairobi work programme, including those active at the community level and those undertaking education, training and awareness-raising.¹¹ This presents an opportunity to introduce new expertise to the process and further enhance implementation. New experts may come from Parties or organizations, or they might support the work programme as individual experts, depending on the characteristics of the activity to be undertaken.

42. At the same session, the SBSTA encouraged organizations that have national and regional representation¹² to develop specific activities at the national and regional level in support of the objective and expected outcomes of the Nairobi work programme. This could expand substantially the source of

⁹ See document FCCC/SBSTA/2008/12 and <<http://unfccc.int/534.php>>.

¹⁰ As described in paragraph 10 above.

¹¹ FCCC/SBSTA/2008/6, paragraph 26.

¹² FCCC/SBSTA/2008/6, paragraph 30.

available expertise. The SBSTA recognizes the important role of regional centres and networks in work relevant to adaptation, and this implicitly indicates another source from which additional experts could be drawn to assist in the implementation of the programme.

43. In order to promote the assistance of the best experts in the field in the implementation of the Nairobi work programme, the secretariat should ensure that those experts are aware of the work programme, its activities and the role that specific individual experts play in those activities. This requires efforts to increase awareness of the programme. Because of the wide range of areas of expertise required for its nine areas of work, this effort would have to target the literature and events of many different disciplines. Furthermore, any drive to attract experts must occur in ways visible to experts from non-Annex I Parties, to allow the secretariat to maintain a geographically balanced involvement of experts.

IV. Conclusions

44. The direct engagement of experts from Parties in mandated workshops and expert meetings, as well as the expertise provided by an even wider range of experts from Parties through submissions and other contributions, have constituted vital input to the first phase of the Nairobi work programme. This contribution is a modest and early example of North–South, South–South, South–North and North–North knowledge sharing. It has also been instrumental in efforts by a wide range of organizations and institutions to achieve more focused outcomes when assisting Parties to meet their adaptation needs.

45. Involving a wide spectrum of organizations has brought a depth of expertise to the work programme that was not available to Parties through the traditional methods of work, which mainly involved engaging a limited number of organizations or individual experts in the activities to be undertaken. A large number of diverse implementing and technical organizations,¹³ many of them of regional character, have been present at discussions held during Nairobi work programme activities. This has enabled many of the knowledge needs of Parties to be met. The activities provide many avenues for representatives of organizations to share their expertise, including through workshops, preparatory meetings for each area of work, the focal point forum and online dissemination of information, as well as initiatives such as action pledges that may assist Parties in their national adaptation actions.

46. However, individual experts are also needed to support the work of the Nairobi work programme, both technically and logistically. Such experts have been brought in to assist in the implementation of the work programme in a manner which ensures flexibility, the best use of resources and achievement of the objectives of the mandated activities. This approach has been well received by the experts themselves, as well as by the Parties and organizations that benefited from their input.

47. The results of the first phase of the Nairobi work programme have been made possible by the active engagement of experts from Parties and organizations and individual experts in the implementation of mandated activities, and by organizations undertaking their own activities in support of the objective and themes identified in decision 2/CP.11.

48. In accordance with the conclusions of the SBSTA, this active engagement should be continued and enhanced in the second phase of the Nairobi work programme in order to progress even further towards the objective and expected outcomes of the programme, and in order to assist Parties in meeting any future requests for adaptation expertise from the UNFCCC process.

¹³ Includes the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, the Ibero-American Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC), Practical Action, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.