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

**Report on the technical workshop on integrating practices, tools and systems
for climate risk assessment and management and disaster risk reduction
strategies into national policies and programmes**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note provides a summary of the technical workshop on integrating practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and disaster risk reduction strategies into national policies and programmes, held under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The workshop took place in Havana, Cuba, from 10 to 12 March 2009. Discussions at the workshop focused on practical tools and systems, good practice and successful examples, opportunities and barriers. This note includes a summary of the key discussion points, including the main challenges in integrating risk assessment and management and risk reduction strategies into national policies and programmes, as well as recommendations and issues for follow-up and further consideration.

* Exact dates within the sessional period are subject to confirmation.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its twenty-eighth session,¹ requested the secretariat, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA, to organize before its thirtieth session a technical workshop on integrating practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies into national policies and programmes.
2. The workshop was to involve representatives from Parties, relevant organizations and experts, with a view to facilitating the identification of successful examples of using such tools and integrating such practices into national policies and programmes. The SBSTA further requested the secretariat to prepare a report on this workshop, to be made available by its thirty-first session.

B. Scope of the note

3. This document provides information on the workshop referred to in paragraph 1 above, drawing upon the presentations and the discussions that took place.²
4. The document contains:
 - (a) A description of the workshop proceedings (chapter II);
 - (b) An analysis of the issues addressed at the workshop (chapter III);
 - (c) A summary of recommendations for further action identified by participants (chapter IV);
 - (d) An outline of possible next steps under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (chapter V).

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

5. The SBSTA may wish to consider this workshop report at its thirty-third session as part of its consideration of the outputs from activities completed prior to that session, with a view to reviewing the results of the implementation of the Nairobi work programme.

D. Background

6. 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
7. Activities in the work area of adaptation planning and practices under the Nairobi work programme are undertaken with a view to advancing the objective stated in the annex to decision 2/CP.11, in particular to advancing the sub-themes stated in paragraph 3 (b) (i), "Promoting the

¹ FCCC/SBSTA/2008/6, paragraph 57.

² The relevant documentation related to the workshop is available at <<http://unfccc.int/4742.php>>.

³ Decision 2/CP.11, annex, paragraph 1.

development and dissemination of methods and tools for assessment and improvement of adaptation planning, measures and actions, and integration with sustainable development”; (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”; and (b) (iv), “Facilitating communication and cooperation among and between Parties and relevant organizations, business, civil society and decision makers, and other stakeholders”.

II. Proceedings

8. The technical workshop on integrating practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and DRR strategies into national policies and programmes was held in Havana, Cuba, from 10 to 12 March 2009. It was organized by the secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Cuba and the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR). UN/ISDR provided financial support for the participation of a number of disaster reduction experts. Ms. Helen Plume, Chair of the SBSTA, chaired the workshop.

9. Participants at the workshop comprised 81 representatives from Parties and relevant international organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are active in the areas of adaptation planning and practices, climate-related risks and extreme events, and DRR.

10. Discussions at the workshop were informed by a technical paper⁴ and by the outcomes of two previous related workshops under the Nairobi work programme – one on climate-related risks and extreme events held in June 2007 in Cairo, Egypt,⁵ and one on adaptation planning and practices held in September 2007 in Rome, Italy.⁶

11. The workshop opened with a set of introductory presentations providing background information. This included the objective of the Nairobi work programme, the preliminary results from the *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*,⁷ and an overview of the technical paper mentioned in paragraph 10 above and related documents for the workshop.

12. Experiences and lessons learned in integrating climate risk assessment management and DRR strategies into national policies and programmes were discussed in two plenary sessions. This covered strategies, practices and programmes, and methods and tools at international, regional and national levels. Three breakout groups met in two further sessions to take stock in more detail and discuss key challenges in advancing integration and opportunities to address those challenges. These three groups focused their discussions on integration from the perspective of hazard type, sector and administrative level.

13. The Government of Cuba presented its national climate-related DRR strategies, and associated technical and operational systems, at a side event on the margins of the workshop.

14. Outcomes of the breakout group sessions were presented and discussed at a further plenary session. In addition, Parties and organizations were invited to make new action pledges, provide updates on existing pledges and share information on relevant activities, with a view to addressing the challenges in advancing integration as identified during the workshop. The preliminary findings of a survey carried out during the workshop on users’ needs for integration tools were presented. A representative of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change introduced a scoping meeting on a possible special report on

⁴ FCCC/TP/2008/4.

⁵ Further information on the workshop is available at <<http://unfccc.int/3953.php>>.

⁶ Further information on the workshop is available at <<http://unfccc.int/4036.php>>.

⁷ The report is available at <<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/report/index.php?id=9413>>.

managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance adaptation, which was subsequently held in late March 2009 in Oslo, Norway. A final panel was held for breakout group facilitators and participants to discuss outcomes of the breakout sessions and make recommendations for possible next steps and follow-up actions under the Nairobi work programme. The workshop concluded with a summary by the chair.

III. Analysis of the issues addressed at the workshop

A. Introduction

15. There was a clear consensus among participants on the need for integration of climate risk assessment and management and DRR into development planning. Unless they are “internalized” within the development planning process, outcomes of climate risk assessment and management and DRR will be limited and difficult to sustain. To illustrate this, UN/ISDR stressed that, although mortality from climate-related disasters has fallen sharply in recent years as a result of successful DRR strategies, economic and livelihood losses have risen. Fundamental to this is that potential risks associated with climate change and variability have not yet been systematically considered or addressed in national and sectoral development plans.

16. During the workshop, Parties and organizations reported a wide range of activities related to facilitating the integration of climate risk assessment and management and DRR strategies into national policies and programmes.

B. Practices, tools and systems

1. Strategies, approaches, processes and practices

17. A wide range of strategies, approaches, processes, practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and DRR, and for their integration into national policies and programmes, was shared among participants, with the former being the focus of the discussions.

18. During the introductory session, it was underlined that national policy frameworks need to link DRR strategies under the Hyogo Framework for Action⁸ together with adaptation strategies and poverty reduction strategies, and to focus on addressing underlying risk factors such as poor urban governance, vulnerable rural livelihoods and ecosystem decline.

19. During breakout group discussions, participants examined the differences between developing integrated plans for adaptation to climate change and DRR, and integrating adaptation and DRR into national policies and programmes. It was acknowledged that both are valuable but that there are significant differences in the underlying approaches, processes and practices to achieve them. Discussions covered both of these forms of integration.

20. Two broad types of strategy emerged from the discussions: the first taking a long-term perspective, focusing on adaptive capacity and policy development, the second concerned with near-term risk reduction. These broadly characterize the work of the adaptation and DRR communities, respectively. They complement each other and are closely linked through the common objective of achieving and sustaining development goals in the face of climate-related risks.

21. Underpinning both types of strategy are generic approaches to integration that appear to be applicable across a range of hazards, sectors and governance levels. These include engaging

⁸ <<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/hfa.htm>>.

stakeholders, establishing multi-stakeholder committees, validating and using indigenous knowledge, and multi-hazard, multi-sector and adaptive management approaches.

22. In support of these generic approaches, a range of processes were identified as being conducive to integration. In particular, several Parties mentioned that the process of preparing national communications and developing national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), which necessarily involve the engagement of multiple stakeholders, particularly those at national level, have been valuable in creating the awareness and capacity required for meaningful integration to take place. Participants also highlighted the importance of creating an enabling policy environment and ensuring a financial commitment to develop and sustain capacity.

23. Further practices for achieving integration were also discussed. They include: working with existing processes and practices (e.g. environmental impact assessments) and policy frameworks (e.g. millennium development goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs)); facilitating interaction between stakeholder groups, including developers and users of information; strengthening key national institutions (e.g. hydro-meteorological services); drawing on local knowledge; promoting coordination and cooperation; communicating in accessible languages; and encouraging interplay between science, policy and local knowledge. In addition, capacity-building, research, training and awareness-raising were underlined in several presentations and interventions as key elements of adaptation and DRR strategies, and their integration into national policies and programmes.

2. Tools and systems

24. A wide range of tools that help to create the enabling environment for integration and/or achieve integration itself were highlighted. Some of the tools discussed include: scenarios; spatial analysis; hazard, risk and vulnerability mapping; a “risk atlas”; monitoring and early warning systems; and financial risk transfer instruments. The World Health Organization reported that tools are being developed for environmental risk assessment and for assessing the burden of disease. Practical applications presented included Cuba’s drought monitoring and cyclone early warning systems and the work by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to develop guidelines for hazard monitoring and mapping, and to support catastrophe insurance markets.

25. Other tools identified include: risk communication to raise public awareness and gain political support; critical thresholds for risk communication and assessment; regional networks and forums to build regional capacity and foster collaboration; and guidance and guidelines for integrating adaptation and DRR into national development plans and programmes. As an example, the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) presented its tool LOCATE, which is used to design community-based adaptation projects and engage different stakeholders, while a representative of the Climate Prediction and Application Centre at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) noted that the regional forums it convenes have been effective in promoting learning between stakeholders. To support efforts to integrate adaptation to climate change into development planning through knowledge sharing and learning, the Adaptation Learning Mechanism of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides a knowledge-sharing platform that accelerates the process of learning through experience. It draws upon experiences from implementing adaptation programmes, projects and practices on the ground and features tools and practical guidance.

26. The preliminary results from the survey on users’ needs for tools suggested that there needs to be a much greater examination of who will actually use the tools and who the results are targeted at. Tool developers therefore need to consider the specific context that the tool will be used in, including the scale, sector, output and cultural or institutional environment.

27. The effective application of tools to integrate adaptation and DRR into national policies and programmes requires a system of institutional and policy frameworks, technical capacity, coordination and cooperation among key stakeholders and dedicated resources. For example, such factors underpin the highly successful application of the hurricane early warning system developed by Cuba's meteorological services, operated jointly with the National Civil Defence.

C. Opportunities and enabling factors

1. Synergy

28. There was strong convergence on the view that, despite their different histories, institutional structures and funding windows, adaptation, DRR and national development planning should be integrated in order to maximize benefits. Significant experience and expertise exist in all three disciplines, and they should be built and expanded upon to achieve the goal of integration. There are significant opportunities for synergy: adaptation, DRR and development share the same goal of achieving sustainable development in the face of climate-related risks; and they all focus their attention on the most vulnerable members of society. In particular, adaptation and DRR complement each other by focusing on vulnerability to climate-related risks over different timescales and addressing it through different policies and practices. Taken together, adaptation and DRR address the full spectrum of climate-related risks with contextually appropriate responses.

2. Improved provision of information

29. Despite the persistent gaps in knowledge and information required for informed decision-making on adaptation and DRR and their integration into national policies and programmes, significant progress has been made towards the provision and dissemination of information in many parts of the world. In addition, encouraging cases are emerging where the benefits from policymaking which is supported by scientific information are helping to increase policymakers' confidence in such information. This is likely to further the provision and dissemination of data and information to support the integration process. The Climate Prediction and Application Centre at IGAD reported early success in producing tailor-made climate information to support decision-making in the Horn of Africa.

3. Emerging recognition of the need for integration by practitioners

30. One emerging enabling factor identified during the workshop is that despite the comfort of working within one's own field of expertise, practitioners from both the adaptation and the DRR communities increasingly recognize the need to integrate their respective practices into national policies and programmes. The need for adaptation to be integrated into national development policies was endorsed by several participants. As an example of this principle in practice, BCAS works closely with the General Economic Division of the Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, to integrate adaptation into the planning process and provide technical input to bilateral agencies for integrating climate change concerns into development project design and implementation.

4. Relevant ongoing processes and associated institutional frameworks and policies

31. As noted in paragraph 22 above, the preparation of second national communications by many Parties has been identified as an instrumental process for facilitating integration. For example, Egypt reported that all relevant ministries are represented on the national climate change committee which is overseeing the development of Egypt's second national communication. This multi-stakeholder committee has been actively engaged in policy dialogues and there has been significant political support for climate change policies within the context of national development planning. Grenada noted that the findings from its initial national communication were integrated into its national budgeting process.

Other processes that could facilitate integration include NAPAs, the Hyogo Framework for Action and environmental impact assessments.

32. Global and national policy frameworks such as the MDGs and PRSPs can also serve as entry points for integrating adaptation and DRR into national development policies and programmes.

D. Barriers and challenges

1. Insufficient political buy-in

33. Despite the rising political visibility of adaptation at international level in recent years, there is still a call for greater understanding of the urgent need for action in climate risk management. Climate risk and disasters are often perceived as an environmental issue rather than a fundamental challenge to development with strong social and economic implications. Discussions revealed a range of causes of the lack of political support for adaptation, DRR and their integration into national policies and programmes. They include: significant uncertainties related to climate change and its impacts; inadequate risk and uncertainty communication strategies; the short-term nature of the political process (including election cycles and success criteria for politicians); and lack of information on the estimated economic costs of inaction. For adaptation, it was also suggested that a policy framework or set of guidelines similar to the Hyogo Framework for Action (which is concerned with disaster reduction) would be helpful.

2. Compartmentalization of operations

34. A major barrier is compartmentalization and the associated lack of cross-sectoral or ministerial coordination at the policy, strategic development and implementation levels of most governments. This severely limits their ability to integrate adaptation and DRR into development planning. Competing priorities, heavy workloads and the lack of incentives to assess and manage additional risks pose a further challenge for effective implementation.

3. Lack of financial resources

35. There is a lack of financial support for developing and sustaining capacity and for implementing integral policies and programmes. WMO noted that, despite the wide recognition of the importance of decentralizing risk management, putting climate risk management into practice often falls short owing to limited financial commitment from national governments. Sri Lanka explained that the lack of funding constrains its ability to implement priority programmes identified through multi-stakeholder processes.

4. Gaps in capacity, knowledge and information

36. Parties and organizations discussed gaps in technical capacity to carry out data processing and to work with appropriate methods and tools for risk assessment and management. In spite of the considerable progress made to improve the provision of knowledge, information and data in many countries, limits to the coverage (thematic and geographical) and length of data records still hinder robust risk assessment and management decisions. In particular, the significant uncertainties associated with local climate scenario information, the lack of socio-economic information and the absence of economic estimates of climate change impacts and adaptation options often make it impossible to carry out policy-relevant risk assessment. This, in turn, hinders efforts to engage the public and policymakers (as noted in para. 33 above) in any serious policy dialogues that might lead to adaptive management decisions. One breakout group illustrated this point within the context of insurance: the effective operation of an insurance scheme requires a large amount of quantitative information for risk assessment which is not readily available at present.

IV. Summary of recommendations

37. Participants made a number of recommendations for further steps to be taken in integration, based on the presentations and discussions and reflecting the priority areas of work. These recommendations are described in paragraphs 38–44 below.
38. **Create an enabling policy environment, including incentive mechanisms.** The need to create political buy-in, appropriate policy frameworks and incentive mechanisms was highlighted throughout the discussions. Possible ways to achieve this include: promote public education, awareness-raising and advocacy, particularly at a high political level; identify and mobilize ‘champions’; develop model legislation and implementation guidelines that can be adapted at national and local levels; integrate climate risk assessment and management and DRR requirements into environmental impact assessment guidelines; mobilize key institutions such as regional development banks; and use the occurrence of high impact extreme events as a catalyst for change in public policy. Developing national plans for integration may also help to create the necessary policy framework at national level.
39. **Improve availability, accessibility and relevance of knowledge and information.** There is a need to provide incentives and continue support for enhancing observation systems, and for collecting and disseminating data. Modalities for sharing and managing knowledge must be developed. It is important to document how information and knowledge generated by, and shared among, partners are being used to support climate risk assessment and management, DRR and the integration of adaptation and DRR into national policies and programmes. Efforts are also needed to enhance technical capacity for data processing and analysis. Further, knowledge and information need to be made relevant to stakeholder groups. In particular, scientific knowledge and information should be presented in a way that stakeholders understand and can act upon. Making information available in languages other than English will improve its accessibility.
40. **Develop and disseminate practical methods and tools.** Although a wide range of methods and tools for climate risk assessment and management have been developed to address different hazards and sectors, they are unevenly distributed and applied. To facilitate the integration of climate risk assessment and management and DRR into development policies and programmes, practical tools need to be developed further. Pragmatic application of these tools and lessons learned should be encouraged and documented.
41. **Engage multiple stakeholders.** Integrating climate risk assessment and management and DRR into national policies and programmes requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders working in various sectors and focusing on a variety of hazards. Recommendations for engaging stakeholders include: identifying stakeholder roles and responsibilities within the context of development planning; engaging stakeholders and agencies that have a mandate and capacity for implementation; allocating human and financial resources; and providing incentives. In addition, national-level dialogues among stakeholders on the subject of risk, which participants identified as crucial for achieving integration, need to be centred on sectoral and/or thematic issues, rather than driven by climate information.
42. **Improve communication with stakeholders.** Integration requires effective communication. While there are scientific complexities involved in adaptation and DRR, the importance of integrating both into national policies and programmes should be conveyed in simple and concise messages. Efforts need to be made to use standard language, and to ensure that there is common understanding of the terms and expressions used. Local, national and regional experiences in DRR could be used as an entry point into broader discussions of the importance of adaptation. Communication of risks can also be helped by quantifying them or presenting them visually.

43. **Adopt a pragmatic approach to managing uncertainties.** Planning both for adaptation and for DRR can be characterized as decision-making under uncertainty. In this regard, it is possible to move forward using existing knowledge, information and experiences. This is particularly true in an environment that embraces adaptive management. In the absence of “perfect” climate models, projections and scenarios, adaptive management decisions and actions can be taken based on experience and the best information available. These can be flexible enough to be adjusted according to new, improved information as it becomes available over time.

44. **Enhance regional cooperation and networks.** Given the disparities in capacity, expertise and experience among countries within the same region, and the specific challenges and needs in different regions, further enhancing regional cooperation and networks may be an important step forward. Regional cooperation and networks could be strengthened (a) by using mechanisms to raise the profile of networks and cooperative initiatives and secure the necessary resources; and (b) by improving websites or providing clearing houses or other forms of support for generating and sharing experiences, knowledge and information. Systems also need to be put in place to promote a two-way flow of knowledge and information between regional networks and countries within the region.

V. Issues for follow-up and further consideration⁹

A. Action pledges and possible actions to be undertaken by Nairobi work programme partners to address barriers and challenges and to implement recommendations

45. Through their presentations and interventions during the workshop, Parties and organizations indicated possible ways to address the barriers and challenges identified and to implement the recommendations made.

46. Recognizing that little collaboration exists between the adaptation and DRR communities at the Canadian Federal Government level, Canada, represented by a delegate who oversees adaptation initiatives, pledged to make efforts to bring the two communities together and act more effectively in managing climate risks and reducing climate-related disaster risks.

47. To fully explore the synergy between adaptation and DRR and their integration into national policies and programmes, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center pledged to explore possibilities for joint learning with partners and practitioners from the adaptation community.

48. In response to the disparities in institutional capacity, expertise and experiences between countries, Environmental Development Action in the Third World pledged to act as a regional focal point for Africa. Possible activities proposed include regional workshops that bring together Nairobi work programme partners, policymakers, researchers and practitioners to showcase good practice.

49. To address the gaps in data and information, particularly at the subnational and local scales, and gaps in technical capacity for applying data, information and tools for DRR and climate risk assessment and management, WMO committed resources for a diverse portfolio of programmes and projects to enhance meteorological and hydrological observation and monitoring systems, strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems through capacity-building, and develop a new framework to facilitate the provision of science-based and user-oriented climate information in support of adaptation decision-making.

50. A number of pledges were made to address the importance of national and local level actions. UNDP pledged to support community-based adaptation projects in 10 pilot countries with a view to

⁹ Based on the outcomes of the workshop, a call for action was issued under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA. The online documentation is available at <http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/application/pdf/cfa_08_app_ccree.pdf>.

informing national and subnational development policies and facilitating knowledge sharing and learning among participating communities. The World Food Programme pledged to deliver adaptation projects concerning food security and land management. The ProVention Consortium undertook to develop and disseminate a toolkit of community risk assessment methods and case studies from around the world. BCAS will undertake a range of subnational and local level activities including vulnerability and adaptation needs assessment capacity-building for local NGOs and implementation of pilot community-based adaptation projects.

51. With regard to the current lack of empirical evidence for integration of climate risk assessment and management and DRR strategies into national policies and programmes, UNDP will pilot the integration of adaptation and DRR into development planning in four countries (with an intention to scale up to 35 countries in the next few years) with a focus on institutional capacity-building and technical support. It is also supporting the integration of adaptation into long-term national development plans in Africa through a bilateral programme. In addition, UNDP is a partner of the Climate Change Investment Initiative, which aims to integrate adaptation into national long-term planning and investment decisions.

52. To strengthen regional cooperation and networks, Brazil, with support from the Ibero-American Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC), pledged to share its expertise in climate modelling and regional scenario development with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, through training workshops on the use of a regional climate model and the application of model results in climate risk assessments. The next training workshop is scheduled to take place later in 2009 in Brazil, which will provide participants from the region with information on relevant climate scenarios as well as results of impact assessments related to human health, energy, water resources, floods, desertification, agriculture, coastal zone management and biodiversity.

53. To enhance technical capacity, regional centres and organizations such as the Climate Prediction and Application Centre at IGAD, RIOCC, the Cuban Meteorology Institute and BCAS will continue their efforts in regional capacity-building through training workshops and learning-by-doing initiatives.

B. Possible next steps under the Nairobi work programme

54. The recommended activities outlined in chapter IV above could be undertaken by Parties, relevant organizations and other stakeholders engaged under the Nairobi work programme. These recommendations could also inform the general consideration by the SBSTA at its thirty-third session of the outcomes of the activities under the Nairobi work programme.

55. Workshop participants proposed a set of activities to be undertaken under the Nairobi work programme, under the guidance of the Chair of the SBSTA. Several issues related to implementation, such as legislative mandates, financial resources, national dialogues and institutional frameworks, were highlighted as critical to facilitating integration. Participants noted that some of the outcomes of the discussions at the workshop may provide useful information for Parties in their consideration of relevant agenda items under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation.

56. In relation to the issues of availability and accessibility of information and how it can be used to support decision-making, it was recommended that regional workshops be convened as part of the Nairobi work programme to examine how relevant information is generated and applied to support integration, with a view to sharing experiences and learning from good practice.

57. To raise public awareness, highlight the links between adaptation and DRR, and showcase good practice in integration, the suggestion was made to initiate regular meetings between the two communities as part of the Nairobi work programme, and organize one or more side events at high-level events, such as sessions of the Conference of the Parties or the World Climate Conference.