

Exploring linkages between the SIDS conference and relevant provisions and ongoing work on adaptation under the UNFCCC

The ultimate **objective of the Convention** (Article 2) is the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

Climate change and associated impacts would impose significant challenges to the achievement of sustainable development in small island developing States (SIDS), while any effective and sustainable solution to climate change has to be part of the sustainable development efforts. As such it is important that outcomes of the SIDS Conference 2014 to inform on-going discussion on the post-2015 UN development goals as well as the deliberations related to the new global climate change regime, to be adopted in 2015.

All of the adaptation work streams under the Convention have distinct linkages with SIDS where enhancing capacity to adapt to climate change is of the highest priority. The following section highlights some of the most relevant linkages to the SIDS context.

The Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts

Many SIDS are being affected by intensifying climate change impacts, including extreme weather events, and are vulnerable to foreseeable impacts from slow onset events.¹ Recognizing the formidable challenges developing countries are facing under a changing climate, the COP initiated focused deliberations, at COP 16 (2010) in the context of the Cancun Adaptation Framework,² to consider UNFCCC response to strengthen international cooperation and expertise to understand and reduce loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

A wealth of relevant information and current knowledge on assessing the risks of loss and damage as well as a range of approaches to address them was generated and synthesized under the work programme on loss and damage during 2011–2013.³

Having agreed that the Convention has an important role in enabling countries to enhance action to address loss and damage, the 194 member states to the UNFCCC established, at COP 19 (2013), the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage (L&D mechanism) as a comprehensive, inclusive and strategic response.

The L&D mechanism has three main functions: 1) enhancing knowledge on comprehensive risk management approaches; 2) strengthening dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders; and 3) enhancing relevant action and support. The mechanism is to complement and draw upon the work of relevant organizations and expert bodies outside the Convention, at all levels, in addition to involve existing bodies and expert groups under the Convention.⁴ In this context, the L&D mechanism would provide an ideal entry point for potential synergies between the outcomes of the SIDS conference and the work under the UNFCCC process.

¹ Including sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinization, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification.

² Decision 1/CP.16, paragraphs 25–29.

³ For details on the outputs of the work programme on loss and damage, see <<http://unfccc.int/6056.php>>.

⁴ For further information on the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage, see COP 19 decision on loss and damage (2/CP.19).

The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP)

The NWP, under the purview of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the UNFCCC, aims to assist all Parties, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries (LDCs) and SIDS to 1) improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change; and 2) 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.⁵

The NWP catalyzes stakeholder engagement in the work on adaptation under the UNFCCC process and disseminates knowledge on adaptation. In response to calls for action under the NWP, a large number of partner organizations made action pledges contributing to meet the adaptation knowledge needs.⁶ The NWP provides an ideal channel to highlight relevant outcomes from the SIDS conference as well as draw attention to the work undertaken by SIDS partner organizations and institutions at the regional, national and subnational levels in the lead up to the conference.

National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)

Given LDCs' particular vulnerability to address the challenge of climate change, the UNFCCC member states established an LDC work programme in 2001, which includes NAPAs. NAPA provides a process for the LDCs (which includes 9 SIDS) to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs with regard to adaptation to climate change - those needs for which further delay could increase vulnerability or lead to increased costs at a later stage.⁷ The COP also established a Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to support the preparation and implementation of NAPAs, and an LDC Expert Group (LEG) to provide technical support and advice to the LDCs.⁸

Central to the NAPA document is a list of ranked priority adaptation activities/projects as well as short profiles of each activity, designed to facilitate the development of project proposals for implementation of the NAPA. In this context, the NAPA documents may provide useful entry points for organizations and institutions to enhance their support for adaptation efforts by the small island LDCs.

National adaptation plan (NAP)

The NAP process was established under the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010. It enables Parties to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs) as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those needs. It is a continuous, progressive and iterative process which follows a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach.

The objectives of the NAP process are to 1) reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience; and 2) facilitate the integration of adaptation, in a coherent manner, into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities, in particular development planning processes and strategies, within all relevant sectors and at different levels, as appropriate. In this context, the NAP process provides the SIDS conference optimal linkages to seek opportunities for long-term collaboration with national governments of SIDS.

⁵ For the details of the scientific and technical work undertaken by the NWP, see <unfccc.int/nwp>.

⁶ For further information on action pledges under the NWP, see <https://www3.unfccc.int/pls/apex/f?p=333:4:1797089655830477:>

⁷ For further information on NAPAs, see <<http://unfccc.int/7567.php>>.

⁸ For further information related to support for NAPAs, see <<http://unfccc.int/7569.php>>.