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UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Twelfth session

Bonn, 12 - 16 June 2000

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

OTHER MATTERS

Article 6 of the Convention: education, training and public awareness

Submissions from Parties

Note by the secretariat

1. At its eighth session, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) invited Parties to submit to the secretariat, by 14 December 1998, their views on possible means of promoting the implementation of Article 6, for compilation into a miscellaneous document. The SBSTA invited the secretariat to put forward proposals on how to integrate Article 6 into the work programme of the SBSTA, taking into account the above submissions from Parties, for consideration at its tenth session (FCCC/SBSTA/1998/6, para. 37 (g)).

2. At its tenth session, the Chairman of the SBSTA expressed regret that the small number of submissions received (three) had prevented the secretariat from formulating proposals. He invited Parties to submit further proposals to the secretariat, by 15 October 1999, to serve as a basis for a more substantive discussion at the twelfth session of the SBSTA (FCCC/SBSTA/1999/6, para. 61).

3. The secretariat has received two such submissions.* In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, these submissions are attached and are reproduced in the language in which they were received and without formal editing.

* In order to make these submissions available on electronic systems, including the World Wide Web, these contributions have been electronically scanned and/or retyped. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the texts submitted.

FCCC/SBSTA/2000/MISC.3

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PAPER NO. 1: KENYA

ARTICLE 6 OF THE CONVENTION: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Lack of awareness on climate change and policies for responding to it impedes government efforts to implement their commitments, including limiting emissions and promoting adaptation. This barrier to action also hinders the sustainability of GEF projects by discouraging the necessary public support for understanding activities that will increase use of renewable energy and energy conservation and efficiency measures.

So far GEF projects on climate change either have provided no funding to climate change awareness or if all a very paltry figures that cannot take work outside the capitals.

There is need to raise levels of awareness about climate change and increase stakeholder participation in implementing policies and technologies that limit net emissions and promote adaptation.

- We need national outreach programmes that will address specific target audiences
- The only way you can enhance the sustainability of climate change programmes/projects is by institutionalising public awareness programmes by demonstrating concrete ways in which awareness raising activities will contribute to actual - on the ground action to emit greenhouse gas emissions
- IPCC work has remained in the domain of those who participate in IPCC and UNFCCC processes Climate Committee, Decision makers and certain circles of those that are literate in English. Work should start on making this information flow to general public
- Efforts be made to repackage the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC in a form understandable by the general public
- On the school curricula - countries be facilitated to have climate change issues incorporated

THE FOCAL POINT - should be enabled to:-

- Develop, collect, adapt, repackage and disseminate climate change materials and materials that promote adaptation and mitigation to climate change
- Establish national outreach programmes on climate change by identifying messages, channels, resources, media strategies and parties that promote effective responses to climate change
- Sharing of material will raise international cooperation
- Demonstrates nationally on how to build public awareness programmes on climate change and translate the increased awareness to actual on the ground action. It must be recognised that the contribution of awareness to effective behaviour change will take longer to realise (long after end of the projects).

PAPER NO. 2: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ARTICLE 6 OF THE CONVENTION: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The United States believes that climate change presents a significant challenge that mandates that both our decisionmakers and the general public are educated about the phenomena of climate change and its potential impacts. Education and training are essential to an adequate response to climate change because the issues and proposed responses are so complex. There is a tremendous need to build broad understanding of climate issues among policymakers, government officials, scientists, business leaders, and the general public to ensure that decisions negotiated in international fora represent the interests of all participating parties and constituents. The need for awareness raising and education will continue and evolve for many years as capacity is created to identify, design, and implement market-based and other approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, successful adaptation to the effects of climate change will require knowledge of the possible consequences resulting from climate change and a clear understanding of options for responses. Moreover, only through a broad-based understanding of these issues can we make appropriate decisions regarding choices that will help us to reach the goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In the United States, we have a very active NGO community, working tirelessly to distribute information on climate change to the public, and we applaud their efforts to share a wide range of viewpoints. At the same time, the U.S. government also plays a lead role in disseminating climate change information to the public.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has an extensive domestic program of education and outreach to the public. This program has many elements including, for example: conferences on climate change and its potential impacts, distribution of information via internet mailing lists, and information specifically addressing the potential climate change impacts on each state in the country. The EPA has also worked extensively with individual cities and states in an effort to generate greenhouse gas inventories and action plans. EPA takes advantage of its regional office structure as well, hosting regional conferences on climate change, and discussing the state of play in the UNFCCC negotiation process, the anticipated economic impacts of climate change to particular regions, and other related climate change topics. Climate change is so complex and so broad reaching that the public is not always able to recognize what this challenge means for the average person.

We have found that education and outreach efforts have the greatest resonance with our citizens when they learn what climate change will mean to them personally, and what impact it will have on their daily lives. In this respect, EPA's workshops have been very successful. In addition, the United States is currently undergoing extensive work on the National Assessment of Climate Change Impacts. This program is designed to assess the regional implications of climate change and to better understand the level of greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere. Workshops are being held across the country and a variety of regional assessments are planned. A reporting document will be released in early 2000.

More details of the many elements of this program, as well as updates of the work in progress, are available through the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

In response to the broad range of needs expressed by developing countries, the U.S. believes that an approach is needed which integrates education, training, and outreach activities with long-term capacity building efforts. To this end, U.S. government funded activities in developing countries have provided educational, training, and financial assistance on a range of climate-related issues while building the skills of in-country professionals. These activities are carried out through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), EPA, the Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Country Studies Program (USCSP).

During the course of the last year, U.S. agencies have sponsored workshops and seminars throughout the world, addressing technology transfer, vulnerability and adaptation, monitoring and evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions, and development and understanding of the Kyoto mechanisms, to name a few. In the year to come, USAID will conduct workshops on the economics of climate change in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Furthermore, several U.S.-based training opportunities are being offered on climate change project development, macro-economic modeling for climate change planning, and monitoring and evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions from both the forestry/land-use and energy sectors. In addition, the USCSP will host a major international workshop in the Philippines this winter on the development of National Climate Change Action Plans. We look forward to the participation of our developing country colleagues in these opportunities.

The United States believes that use of the Internet for sharing information and educational materials can be very useful for reaching the widest possible audience. As we have noted before, the U.S. government supports a large number of Internet sites on environmental issues, and many that are specific to climate change as well. We also commend the UNFCCC and IPCC for their efforts to share information via the Internet. In addition, since COP-4 we have posted all U.S. government submissions to the UNFCCC and IPCC on the U.S. Department of State's website as a means to provide another venue for access to our papers. We have also included UNFCCC submissions of the Umbrella Group on this site.

As we noted earlier, non-governmental communities have an important role to play in education and public outreach, and we believe that it is essential that we continue to engage our non-governmental communities in this process. Their efforts serve to inform broad populations on the importance of action, on our international progress – including the UNFCCC proceedings here in Bonn – and at the national level. We welcome and encourage their continued participation.

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