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MATTERS RELATING TO THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Report on the third meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The third meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) was held in Samoa from 3 to 5 March 2003. This document reports on procedural matters, such as election of LEG officers and other matters relating to membership, and substantive issues, such as the LEG service model, submissions of the LEG on the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund, and LEG recommendations on capacity-building needs and on the promotion of regional synergies.

This document also includes a summary of the LEG workshop on the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action by least developed country small island developing States, which was held from 6 to 8 March 2003, also in Samoa.

* This document went through an extensive review process before it was finalized. As a result, its submission was delayed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties, by its decision 29/CP.7, established the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to advise on the preparation and implementation strategy for national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), and in the same decision adopted the terms of reference of the LEG (FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.4). According to these terms of reference, the LEG is to convene twice each year.

2. The Government of Samoa hosted the third LEG meeting, in Apia, from 3 to 5 March 2003. Financial support for the organization of the meeting was provided by the Governments of the Netherlands and Canada.

B. Scope of the note

3. This document summarizes the discussions that took place at the third LEG meeting. It also reports on the LEG workshop on NAPA preparation by least developed country (LDC) small island developing States, which was held from 6 to 8 March 2003, also in Samoa.

II. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A. Topics discussed

4. Topics discussed at the Third LEG meeting were:

- (a) Final preparations for the small island developing States regional workshop;
- (b) Coordination of LEG support with that provided by implementing agencies;
- (c) Formulating the LEG submission on strategies for implementing NAPAs and ways and means to address the various elements of the LDC work programme;
- (d) Election of a new LEG bureau, and other matters relating to membership;
- (e) Formulating the LEG submission on strategies for implementing NAPAs and ways and means to address the various elements of the LDC work programme;
- (f) Further work on the promotion of regional synergies;
- (g) Formulating recommendations on capacity-building needs for the preparation and implementation of NAPAs.

B. Election of LEG officers

5. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of the terms of reference of the LEG, the LEG is to elect annually a Chair, a Vice-Chair and two rapporteurs from among its least developed country (LDC) members. At its third meeting in Samoa the group elected a new bureau comprising Mr. Laavasa Malua (Samoa), Chair; Mr. Paul Desanker (Malawi), Vice-Chair; and Mr. Lubinda Aongola (Zambia), anglophone rapporteur. As the only francophone member of the LEG had resigned earlier in 2003, the group decided that the position of francophone rapporteur would remain vacant until a new francophone LEG member is designated.

C. Other matters relating to membership

6. Given that the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) is expected to be reconstituted at the eighteenth sessions of the subsidiary bodies, it was agreed that the LEG Chair would communicate to the CGE the composition of the current LEG, so that the CGE, in its new membership, would take into consideration the provisions of paragraph 2 of the LEG terms of reference annexed to decision 29/CP.7, which states that among the members of the LEG at least one LDC expert and one expert from Annex II Parties shall also be a member of the CGE. This is also consistent with the CGE mandate (decision 31/CP.7, paragraph 2).

III. SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

A. The LEG service model

7. The LEG discussed its service model for supporting LDC Parties in the NAPA-preparation process, and the modalities governing the interaction between the LEG and LDC Parties on the one hand and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies on the other. On the relationship between the LEG and LDC Parties, the LEG reiterated its decision that LEG members, in their provision of support for NAPA preparation in LDC Parties, will not undertake individual travel to specific countries in their capacity as LEG members. A proposed text containing such modalities is currently in preparation and, when finalized, will be shared by the LEG Chair with the Chair of the LDC Group and the GEF and its implementing agencies.

8. The secretariat has created an email address (leghelp@unfccc.int), through which LDC Parties can send to the LEG their requests for assistance. The secretariat has also operationalized its low-bandwidth LDC page at <http://unfccc.int/program/sd/ldc/> which includes a section addressing LEG issues.

9. The secretariat distributed, for discussion by the LEG, a concept paper for an "LDC climate change support network", which outlines a mechanism for technical support to the LEG at the regional level, using regional institutions and/or a network of LDC experts, and also for providing generic support to LDC Parties in implementing their work programme and in their participation in the negotiation process. Further work will be done to streamline this proposal.

B. Submission by the LEG on the LDC Fund

10. The COP, by its decision 8/CP.8, invited the LEG to submit views on strategies for implementing NAPAs and on ways and means to address the various elements of the LDC work programme. The submission prepared by the LEG is included in annex I to this document. The LEG noted that the LDC work programme includes activities other than NAPAs, and that some criteria need to be developed to address eligibility and prioritization of projects to be supported from the LDC Fund; the LEG will arrange for the preparation of a paper to develop such criteria.

C. Submission by the LEG on the Special Climate Change Fund

11. The COP, by its decision 7/CP.8, invited the LEG to submit views on activities, programmes and measures to be funded by the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), in relation to the LEG mandate. The proposal drafted by the LEG is included in annex II to this document; it emphasizes that in the early stages of implementation of the fund, it should provide support for NAPA activities (e.g. those relating to capacity-building for adaptation), given that activities proposed through NAPAs follow a rigorous assessment and evaluation process in accordance with paragraph 2 of decision 5/CP.7.

D. Recommendations on capacity-building needs

12. The LEG noted that it had already undertaken capacity-building activities for NAPA preparation through formulating the annotated guidelines for the preparation of NAPAs, organizing the LEG workshop on capacity-building for NAPA preparation in Dhaka from 18 to 21 September 2002, and organizing the LEG Workshop on NAPA Preparation by LDC small island developing States in Samoa from 6 to 8 March 2003 in response to the provisions of decision 8/CP.8.

13. On the issue of providing recommendations on capacity-building needs for the preparation and implementation of NAPAs in accordance with paragraph 9 (c) of the LEG terms of reference, the LEG agreed to revisit this issue upon the completion of the four NAPA regional workshops mandated by decision 8/CP.8. The LEG would then make recommendations to the COP at its ninth session based on the discussions and outcomes of the regional workshops.

E. Further work on the promotion of regional synergies

14. One LEG member circulated a draft proposal for a paper that addresses synergies among multilateral environmental agreements in combination with regional synergies on the African continent. The group agreed to continue its work on this issue, also taking into consideration the outcomes of the LEG regional workshops on NAPA preparation.

IV. WORKSHOP FOR NAPA PREPARATION IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

15. Pursuant to decision 8/CP.8, the LEG held the workshop on NAPA preparation by LDC small island developing States at Apia (Samoa) from 6 to 8 March 2003 (see annex III). It was hosted, back-to-back with the third LEG meeting, by the Government of Samoa, and was organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) as one component of a project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the GEF.

16. The 40 participants at the workshop included members of national NAPA teams from environment, planning and finance ministries, representatives of civil society in South Pacific LDC Parties, representatives of several United Nations organizations (UNDP, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNFCCC and UNITAR) and of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and eight LEG members. The workshop was inaugurated by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa.

17. The workshop consisted of presentations given by LEG experts and by experts from international organizations and other institutions, together with training sessions in which participants were divided into small groups – either by country or by professional affiliation – to undertake hands-on training on the different steps required for completing a NAPA.

18. The main issues highlighted during the workshop were that:

(a) The NAPA-proposal preparation process in the region has been largely country-driven. The role of the implementing agencies has centred on providing support in the final stages of drafting, with the aim of enhancing the chances for prompt approval of the proposals;

(b) Despite difficulties arising from the geographical dispersion of many of the islands constituting some of the Pacific LDCs, strong interaction with local communities has already been identified as a mainstay of the NAPA process in these countries. In this context, a strong participatory approach has already been integrated into the process, even at the early stages of preparation of NAPA proposals. This is helping to ensure collective ownership of the process, particularly at the grassroots level;

(c) Regional entities such as SPREP can potentially provide an important element of support to Pacific LDCs, including as a regional clearing house of information, and helping to catalyse any possible regional synergies in the NAPA preparation process;

(d) Because NAPA preparation is intended to be based on existing information, it is important to be able to ensure awareness of, and access to, available information sources and to mobilize these in support of the NAPA process. For example, geographic information systems, constitute a readily available tool to aid countries in assessing their vulnerability and options for adaptation to climate change;

(e) Similarly, methodological approaches are readily available to support some aspects of the NAPA preparation process, including ranking immediate and urgent needs through multicriteria analysis, which allows for the prioritization of adaptation activities using unquantified information as input;

(f) Most Pacific LDCs have completed their national communications, and realize that these could serve as one of the starting points for the preparation of NAPAs, rather than the reverse;

(g) Mainstreaming the NAPA process is seen as a way to address climate change issues through its integration into general development processes. It helps reinforce the priority given to the NAPA exercise, particularly at the national policy-making level.

Annex I

**Views by the LDC Expert Group
on strategies for implementing national adaptation programmes of action
and ways and means to address the various elements
of the Least Developed Countries Work Programme**

A. The implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) in the context of overall adaptation funding

1. By its decision 8/CP.8, the COP invited the LDC Expert Group to submit to the secretariat views on strategies for implementing NAPAs, and ways and means to address the various elements of the LDC work programme.
2. As noted in decision 5/CP.7, the following are the elements of the LDC Work Programme:
 - i. Strengthening/establishing national climate change secretariats and/or focal points;
 - ii. Training in negotiating skills and language for LDC negotiators;
 - iii. Preparation and implementation of NAPAs;
 - iv. Promotion of public awareness programmes;
 - v. Development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology;
 - vi. Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to support implementation of NAPAs;
 - vii. Establishment of the LEG.
3. The LDC Fund was set up to fund the LDC work programme. This does not necessarily imply that all elements of the work programme need be funded from the LDC Fund. In decision 5/CP.7 Annex II Parties are invited to contribute financially to the LDC work programme. Furthermore, in decision 8/CP.8, Annex II Parties are encouraged to support, through bilateral and other sources of funding, LDCs on training needs in negotiating skills and language. Decision 27/CP.7 specifies that the LDC Fund is to be complementary to other relevant funds, including the Special Climate Change Fund and the Adaptation Fund.
4. Given its mandate and terms of reference, in addressing NAPA implementation the LEG will focus on the technical aspects of such advice.
5. NAPAs are an expression of urgent and immediate needs (broadly to include activities, such as projects, integration into other activities, capacity building and policy reform). Parties are in the process of preparing their NAPAs and it is expected that most will be completed within 18-24 months of January 2003.

6. It is expected that over 40 NAPAs, each with a number of prioritized activities, will be seeking implementation within the next two years. It is expected that there will be at least two broad sets of activities identified in NAPAs:

(a) Activities that create an enabling environment to facilitate the integration of urgent and immediate adaptation activities into national planning processes;

(b) Concrete adaptation projects.

7. Given this likelihood, the LEG decided to provide criteria for guiding implementation decisions. This work will be presented, as an information document, before COP 9. It is intended to facilitate discussions by Parties and preparation prior to COP 9.

8. In its initial phase, the LEG provided guidance and advice on the interpretation of the NAPA guidelines in support of the efforts of individual LDCs in preparing their NAPAs. As attention starts to turn to the implementation of NAPAs, the LEG has determined that additional advice on broad criteria to inform collective implementation efforts would be helpful.

B. The LDC Work Programme

9. The LDC work programme has gone through an iterative process from the first meeting of the LDC Group in Geneva in October 2000 till COP 7. The LEG has reviewed this work programme as outlined in decision 5/CP.7.

10. At the third meeting of the LEG, held in March 2003, the group noted, as per the mandate outlined in decision 5/CP.7, paragraph 11 (b), and based on feedback from LDC Parties to members of the group, that the immediate priority is to enable LDC Parties to participate effectively in the climate change process. As a first step there is need to ensure the provision of:

- (a) Simultaneous interpretation (English/French) for the LDC group's meetings, and office facilities, during the sessions of the subsidiary bodies and the Conference of the Parties; and
- (b) Technical, methodological and/or policy support to LDC Parties.

Annex II

**Submission by the LDC Expert Group
on activities, programmes and measures to be funded by the Special Climate Change Fund,
in relation to the LEG Mandate**

1. Paragraph 8 of decision 5/CP.7 outlines a number of activities that should be supported through the special climate change fund and/or the adaptation fund, and other bilateral and multilateral sources. Decision 7/CP.8 decided that activities funded through the SCCF should be complementary to those funded through other bilateral and multilateral funding sources.
2. The urgent and immediate adaptation needs of the LDCs, as identified in NAPAs, will likely be met through a variety of funding sources, including the LDC fund, due to the diverse nature of various activities proposed in NAPAs.
3. Several of the areas identified in paragraph 8 of decision 5/CP.7 readily lend themselves to funding activities identified in NAPAs. NAPAs represent a country driven, rigorous and participatory process that identifies prioritised urgent and immediate adaptation needs of LDCs. For example, paragraph 8 (a) of decision 5/CP.7 calls for prompt funding action where sufficient information is available. The NAPAs provide that sufficiency. In fact, given the principles governing NAPA preparation, such as complementarity with other existing processes, information contained in NAPAs is more than sufficient to launch SCCF funding for adaptation activities.
4. Another key area is capacity building as identified in paragraph 8 (c) of decision 5/CP.7. Given the guidelines to prepare NAPAs, it is anticipated that NAPAs will contain numerous activities that support capacity building, including institutional capacity, for preventive measures, planning, preparedness and management of disasters relating to climate change, including contingency planning, in particular, for droughts and floods in areas prone to extreme weather events.
5. Through various products such as the annotated guidelines and events such as the NAPA launch workshop in Dhaka and the four regional workshops, the LEG, in collaboration with the LDC Parties, together are ensuring that activities identified in NAPAs are prepared in such a way as to be promising candidates for SCCF funding on adaptation. The LEG will continue to provide guidance in accordance with future COP decisions to ensure that adaptation activities as identified in NAPAs represent a great starting point for early funding from SCCF.

Annex III

Agenda of the LDC Expert Group Workshop on NAPA preparation by LDC small island developing States

Day 1: Thursday 6 March

Session 1: moderated by *Richard Muyungi (LDC Chair)*

- Overview of the terms of reference of the LDC Expert Group
Speaker: *Bubu Jallow (LEG)*
- Overview of adaptation to climate change in the LDC Pacific SIDS
Speaker: *Auapaau Andre Volentras (South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP))*

Session 2: moderated by *Paul Desanker (LEG)*

- Country presentations on NAPA Proposals: Emerging Issues, Work Plans
Kiribati
Solomon Islands
Tuvalu
Vanuatu
Samoa

Session 3: moderated by *Bubu Jallow (LEG)*

- Developing a Common Understanding of NAPAs: Principles, Mainstreaming and National Synergies
Speaker: *Dechen Tsering (LEG)*
- Participatory Methods
Speaker: *Annie Roncerel (UNITAR)*
- Matching NAPA Preparation Needs with Available Resources
Speaker: *Lubinda Aongola (LEG)*

Session 4: moderated by *Lubinda Aongola (LEG)*

- Current status of NAPA Proposals and support from UNDP
Speaker: *Tom Twining-Ward (UNDP)*
- Assessing Vulnerability and Needs (Identifying Vulnerability in the Context of Food Security and Extreme Events)
Speaker: *Leoo Polutea (Ministry of Natural Recourses and Environment, Samoa)*
& *Leo Zulu (Department of Geography, University of Illinois)*

Day 2: Friday 7 March

Session 5: moderated by *Abebe Tadege (LEG)*

- Overview of the NAPA Preparation Process and Discussion of Potential Approaches to NAPA
Speaker: *Paul Desanker (LEG)*
- Case Study: Samoa
Speaker: *Bismarck Crawley (Ministry of Natural Recourses and Environment, Samoa)*

Session 6: moderated by *Philip Baker (LEG)*

- Approaches to Ranking Urgent Adaptation Needs
Speaker: *Laavasa Malua (LEG)*
- Approaches and Methods to Ranking Activities to Address Needs
Speaker: *Mizan Khan (LEG)*
- Development of Indicators to Guide Ranking of Needs and Activities: State of the Knowledge
Speaker: *Thanavat Junchaya (UNEP)*
- Thematic breakout groups on Criteria for Prioritization

Session 7: moderated by *Dechen Tsering (LEG)*

- Reporting of Results and Discussion on Ranking
- Demonstration of Multi-criteria Software for Ranking
Speaker: *Luke Brander (Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM))*

Session 8: moderated by *Bubu Jallow (LEG)*

- Open Discussion on the NAPA Process

Day 3: Saturday 8 March**Session 9:** moderated by *Laavasa Malua (LEG)*

- Development of Project Profiles
Speaker: *Philip Baker (LEG) and Youssef Nassef (UNFCCC)*
- Breakout Groups by Country: Exercise to Create Project Profiles
- Reporting of Results

Session 10: moderated by *Bubu Jallow (LEG)*

- Disasters in the Pacific: Trends, Impacts, Responses and Coping Strategies
Speaker: *Atu Kaloumaira (SOPAC Secretariat)*

Session 11: moderated by *Mizan Khan (LEG)*

- Breakout Groups by Country: Critical Assessment - Current Strengths and Areas for Improvement in NAPA Proposals, and Opportunities for Regional Synergies
- Reporting of Results
- Discussion: The Way Forward
