



AUSTRALIA

Enhanced action on adaptation

Submission to the AWG-LCA

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This submission contains Australia's further views on enhanced action on adaptation, including on guiding principles, implementation of adaptation actions, institutional arrangements and monitoring and feedback. Australia has noted the importance of significantly increased finance to support adaptation actions in particularly vulnerable developing countries. The provision of increased support for adaptation as part of the post-2012 agreement is being addressed in the UNFCCC financing negotiation.

Context

Three key understandings underpin Australia's approach on how to enhance action on adaptation to climate change:

- climate change impacts are already being felt and impose an additional burden on development. As such, significantly increased international support is needed, prioritising those most vulnerable and least able to respond to these impacts;
- although the basis for adaptation is climate driven, the responses must be implemented by actors across a range of sectors;
- climate change impacts are location-specific and effective adaptation responses will vary significantly between locations.

Guiding principles

Given the local nature of adaptation actions, the UNFCCC's role should be to catalyse and support the implementation of nationally driven adaptation actions.

Australia proposes the UNFCCC develop principles to guide adaptation approaches, as follows:

1. Adaptation strategies and implementation of adaptation actions should be country-driven, involving all relevant stakeholders.
2. Adaptation strategies and actions should be developed and implemented in the context of broader sustainable development, with the ultimate objective of integrating adaptation priorities throughout national and sub-national decision-making, planning and budgets.
3. Support should be prioritised for those most vulnerable to climate change impacts that are least able to respond.
4. Adaptation strategies and actions should be informed by continuous learning and evidence-based vulnerability assessment processes.

Implementation of adaptation actions

In accordance with the country-driven approach to adaptation, countries should take the lead in implementing adaptation actions appropriate to their local circumstances. Australia recognises the significant efforts of countries in developing National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) to identify immediate and urgent adaptation needs.

It is important that support is provided for the implementation of immediate adaptation actions, particularly in the most vulnerable developing countries. Future efforts can build on existing work, such as the \$150 million International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, through which Australia is funding high priority adaptation needs in vulnerable countries in the Asia-Pacific, with a focus on the Pacific and East Timor.

Parties have also acknowledged the need for a more integrated, longer-term approach to adaptation planning. Australia proposes two mechanisms through which the UNFCCC could support countries in developing and implementing these adaptation strategies:

(1) National Adaptation Strategies

Developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (particularly vulnerable developing countries) which request assistance should receive support to develop National Adaptation Strategies. National Adaptation Strategies will inform domestic action and the provision of increased international financial support to particularly vulnerable

countries. These Strategies could also form a component of a country's sustainable development plan. An Adaptation Advisory Panel (discussed below) could support countries in developing their Strategies.

The Strategies could:

- establish clear objectives for adaptation actions;
- go beyond urgent and immediate needs and ensure a more dynamic and long-term consideration of adaptation needs;
- emphasise programmatic approaches, while also recognising a place for adaptation projects under certain circumstances; and
- be aligned with, and where appropriate influence, national development plans and priorities.

To streamline existing reporting processes under the UNFCCC, National Adaptation Strategies could form part of a country's National Communication, subject to decisions regarding the reporting provisions in a post-2012 agreement. Australia proposes that National Adaptation Strategies be submitted regularly - for example, every three or four years.

As with all adaptation actions, approaches to risk reduction, risk management and risk transfer should be country-driven. Risk responses could be included in a National Adaptation Strategy, with the primary focus on disaster risk reduction and risk management. Australia recognises that insurance could be a useful option for some countries as part of their overall risk management approach. We note however, that insurance only transfers and does not reduce risk. Australia stresses the importance of avoiding any "one-size fits all" mechanisms for addressing adaptation needs. A generic global insurance mechanism would not be consistent with a country-driven approach to adaptation.

(2) Knowledge sharing and linking expertise

The UNFCCC can play a vital role in catalysing action at the national and local level by facilitating the provision of appropriate information on the scientific and technical aspects of adaptation, sharing of experiences and knowledge in implementing adaptation activities, and linking national entities and implementing agencies with necessary expertise.

The Nairobi Work Program has played a useful role in facilitating information sharing and linking expertise and it would be valuable to continue this work beyond the completion of current activities under the Nairobi Work Program in

2010. Any new program should enhance the role of regional centres as hubs for sharing information and expertise (the role of regional centres is discussed further below).

Institutional arrangements

The following criteria should guide institutional arrangements supporting the implementation of adaptation actions:

- institutional arrangements should be fair, effective and efficient;
- it is important to avoid unnecessarily creating new institutional arrangements; instead arrangements should draw on lessons learnt under existing mechanisms, building on what has worked and addressing deficiencies in existing arrangements;
- any institutional arrangements should seek coherence with, and not duplicate, expertise in relevant fields, such as disaster risk reduction;
- the transition to any new institutional arrangements should be planned and implemented to minimise disruption to ongoing efforts, including by building on existing mechanisms and expertise; and
- adaptation actions should be implemented at the national and local level, rather than at the multilateral level, given that adaptation actions are most effective when considered in a local context and undertaken across a range of sectors.

Australia proposes two institutional arrangements to support implementation of adaptation actions:

(1) UNFCCC Adaptation Advisory Panel

The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) has played a valuable role in supporting least developed countries (LDCs) to prepare NAPAs, including by developing appropriate guidelines. The LEG Chair has noted the willingness of the LEG to support non-LDC developing countries prepare NAPAs. Australia proposes the LEG be transformed into an Adaptation Advisory Panel, made up of relevant technical and policy adaptation specialists.

Building on the LEG's work, the Panel's primary role would be to develop broad guidance for developing National Adaptation Strategies and provide support for particularly vulnerable countries in developing these Strategies. This could include linking Parties to relevant expertise and, given the multidisciplinary

nature of adaptation, promoting cross-sectoral understanding and integration of adaptation actions into development planning. The Adaptation Advisory Panel could operate as part of a transitioning phase until the capacity of regional centres is sufficient to undertake this role.

(2) Regional Centres

Adaptation needs and challenges will vary widely. Whilst adaptation actions should be country-driven, regional co-operation between countries facing similar challenges could enhance country-led action.

In some cases, regional centres in areas facing shared or similar adaptation challenges may be able to play a valuable role in harnessing existing expertise and in facilitating knowledge exchange. Enhanced existing or virtual regional centres could play a constructive role as hubs for information exchange, coordination between relevant sectoral agencies and stakeholders, and as a focal point for linking expertise with needs.

Many regional centres are already operating and have well-developed links with their regional communities. To capitalise on these links, the mandate of relevant existing regional institutions could be enhanced, where possible and necessary, rather than establishing new regional institutions to cater to adaptation needs. Virtual regional centres can also serve this purpose at lower costs and may be appropriate for some regions. Over time, enhanced or virtual regional centres could become a platform for activities, such as those under the Nairobi Work Program, and could encompass work undertaken by the Adaptation Advisory Panel.

Monitoring and feedback

Australia values and encourages transparency by all Parties in enhancing action on adaptation. In providing enhanced support for adaptation, it is important that the principle of mutual accountability is observed and practised. Mutual accountability entails monitoring the support provided for adaptation activities, as well as ensuring that effective outcomes are realised from that support.

The proposed National Adaptation Strategies could be used to report the effectiveness of adaptation actions towards stated objectives. A number of mechanisms also currently exist to monitor and evaluate the provision and effectiveness of adaptation support, such as through multilateral funding and Official Development Assistance channels, and these should continue to be utilised.

Recognising that adaptation strategies and actions should be informed by continuous learning, opportunities to review approaches undertaken by Parties are a useful way to share expertise and information and disseminate lessons learned from the practical implementation of adaptation actions.