



AUSTRALIA

Views on further activities, based on the experience with the implementation of the Nairobi Work Programme

The Australian Government is grateful for the efforts of the UNFCCC Secretariat, Parties and other organisations in supporting the delivery of activities under the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation (NWP). We consider that the programme has made a valuable contribution to Parties' understanding of the impacts of climate change and their vulnerabilities. In so doing, it has informed decisions making on adaptation and provided useful underpinnings for countries to take action. A further important contribution of the NWP has been its engagement with external organisations, which has enabled useful two-way conversation regarding the wide range of work being undertaken outside of the UNFCCC.

Australia thinks that it would be very useful to see continuity between the programme's current and future objectives and areas of work. Given that the specific action-oriented sub-themes and nine areas of work were agreed after extensive negotiations, and as there is further important work to be undertaken in these areas, Australia would not support negotiations on new objectives and areas of work. In this regard, we note that there are various opportunities to raise new/relevant adaptation issues throughout UNFCCC forums, including the new Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA).

In terms of future deliverables, Australia's view is that greater emphasis should be placed on the programme's catalytic role to encourage actions by Parties and external organisations/ stakeholders who are carrying out activities which are of direct relevance to the NWP's areas of work. Where appropriate, we also support drawing upon the Working Group II Report (WGII) of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) as a primary resource for the next round of NWP activities. Further details on these and other issues are outlined below.

Furthermore, Australia notes the high level focus on adaptation under the Bali Roadmap and suggests that the outputs of the NWP are closely aligned, and where possible feed-in to, negotiations under the AWG-LCA.

Objectives

The Australian Government supports the retention and deepening of the NWP's existing objectives, namely, to improve the understanding of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, and to assist Parties in making informed adaptation decisions. These objectives should remain the guiding principles in determining future activities under the programme.

Areas of work

The division of the NWP into nine areas of work (methods and tools; data and observations; climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling; climate related risks and extreme events; socio-economic information; adaptation planning and practices; research; technologies for adaptation; and economic diversification) has provided a logical framework within which to conduct the programme's activities. Australia supports the continuation of activities in all of these areas, provided that useful activities can be identified.

Deliverables

Deliverables under the NWP have comprised:

- mandated SBSTA activities (e.g. submissions, synthesis reports, workshops and expert meetings, reports on the outcomes of these meetings);
- furthering the reach of these activities (e.g. user friendly publications); and
- catalysing actions (e.g. engaging organisations, enhancing cooperation, and Action Pledges by Parties and other organisations).

The deliverables have proven effective in progressing the objectives of the programme. While the Australian Government would welcome a similar range of deliverables for future activities under the programme, we encourage reconsideration of their prioritisation, as explained below.

Catalysing actions

The SBSTA activities conducted to date have established a solid foundation for Parties and others to deliver adaptation actions consistent with the programmes' objectives and work areas. To ensure

that we capitalise upon this foundation, greater emphasis could usefully be placed on the NWP's catalytic role by enhancing the use of Action Pledges, which provide a flexible mechanism for Parties and others to implement actions consistent with the programme. Where possible we would encourage attempts to 'match' the Action Pledges with Calls for Action. Furthermore Australia would support a process by which Parties could endorse the Calls for Action. Consideration should be given at SBSTA 28 as to how best to endorse these documents, such that they have sufficient weight as a resource for driving action by Parties and external stakeholders. Australia's initial view is that we should seek to ensure that any endorsed Calls for Action are high level and targeted, and that we should avoid a proliferation of these documents so as not to dilute their impact.

Mandated SBSTA activities

As a pool of useful information on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation has been generated through the first round of mandated SBSTA activities, we suggest that fewer activities are required for the next round of the programme. This would give Parties more time to prepare for, and consider the outcomes of, SBSTA activities, and to implement actions to progress the NWP's objectives. In particular we note the burden that the high number of activities – in particular submissions – has placed on Parties. Australia would support limiting requests for submissions to high level issues, and where possible targeting submissions (for example through providing specific questions to be addressed) and/or combining several issues into single submissions. Furthermore, Australia has found the use of informal meetings of Parties and external stakeholders to be an important mechanism to share views and discuss progress, particularly in advance of formal negotiations.

Priority areas of work

Australia proposes that in determining future activities under the NWP, priority should be placed on addressing information gaps regarding the development of effective national adaptation responses. A broad information base will be of value to developing countries, particularly as increasing levels of funding become available to them through other mechanisms to support adaptation actions. While the first round of activities under the NWP provided useful information on this issue, information gaps remain. In Australia's view, particular gaps include integrated vulnerability assessments and developing national adaptation frameworks. Taking into account activities that are occurring outside of the NWP, we would propose that future activities focus on:

- advancing work on vulnerability assessments and mapping: in this regard, while we recognise the inherent difficulties with developing a global vulnerability map, we would encourage identification of

- gaps, and efforts to enhance national and regional vulnerability assessments. This will be of significant value not only for national planning, but also as a means to prioritise adaptation assistance;
- focusing discussions/workshops on practical adaptation planning and practices, with the aim of sharing information on successful and less successful approaches and driving action at the local level;
 - the WGII report of the IPCC AR4, “Climate Change 2007 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability” is highly relevant to the NWP. It provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date scientific assessment of the impacts of climate change, the vulnerability of natural and human environments, and the potential response through adaptation. The report effectively provides a menu of issues that would be useful for consideration through SBSTA activities. The Australian Government would support the identification of opportunities to assist Parties to examine, interpret and integrate into national policy processes the report’s findings on issues including the impacts and vulnerabilities of systems and sectors, and adaptation options;
 - examining the role of governance arrangements in supporting informed adaptation decision making; and
 - stimulating scientific research: this could involve identifying scientific knowledge gaps, and considering how to stimulate research in these areas, with the intention of making the results available for inclusion in the next IPCC report. Additionally, Parties could consider how to stimulate research in areas identified by the IPCC as deficient, such as the assessment of the economic costs and benefits of adaptation and the availability of high quality climate/impacts data for some regions.

Furthering the reach of these activities

There is a continuing need for adaptation awareness raising activities. While we support the preparation of further user friendly publications and interactive web-based facilities, these need to be carefully targeted to ensure their utility and effectiveness. Potential outputs include:

- an overview document targeted at decision makers in central/funding agencies in developing countries. This could address issues such as vulnerability assessment, mainstreaming, national adaptation planning, good practices and their replication, and obtaining adaptation project funding; and
- an overview publication or facility to improve access to information on methods and tools for vulnerability assessment. Where

possible, it would be useful that such initiatives are targeted at the regional and or sectoral level.

We look forward to considering Parties' submissions on this important issue, and to working with them to identify future activities under the programme.