HIGHLIGHTS FROM FCCC SB-13
INFORMAL MEETINGS
MONDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2000

The week of informal meetings preceding the formal thirteenth sessions of the subsidiary bodies (SB-13) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) began on Monday, 4 September, with an initial briefing by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the Executive Secretary of the FCCC Secretariat.

Following this, informal meetings were convened to consider: guidelines under Protocol Articles 5 (methodological issues), 7 (communication of information) and 8 (review of information); the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms; and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF).

These informal meetings, which are being held from 4-9 September in Lyon, France, immediately precede SB-13, which will take place from 11-15 September. Delegates to SB-13 and the informal meetings will work toward fulfilling the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) adopted at the Fourth Conference of the Parties in November 1998. Under the BAPA, Parties set a two-year deadline for strengthening FCCC implementation and preparing for the future entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. The Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP-6), scheduled to take place from 13-24 November 2000, in The Hague, the Netherlands, will mark the culmination of this two-year process.

SB-13 will aim to make progress on negotiations covering a range of topics necessary for a comprehensive agreement to be reached at COP-6; including: the Protocol mechanisms; implementation of FCCC Article 4.8 and 4.9 and matters relating to Article 3.14 of the Kyoto Protocol (adverse effects); compliance under the Protocol; best practices in policies and measures (P&Ms) among Parties included in Annex I to the FCCC; LULUCF; guidelines under Protocol Articles 5, 7 and 8; and the development and transfer of technologies.

INITIAL BRIEFING

Harald Dovland (Norway), Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, welcomed participants. Noting that only 10 weeks remain before COP-6, he said this week’s meetings would aim to advance progress on text on all issues. He observed that informal consultations and meetings had been held since SB-12 on several key issues, including: adverse effects, technology transfer, the mechanisms, compliance, and LULUCF. In addition, submissions from Parties had been received relating to LULUCF, capacity building and guidelines for Protocol Articles 5, 7 and 8. He noted that these consultations and submissions had assisted in the development of negotiating text.

FCCC Executive Secretary Michael Zamin Mitcutjar thanked the French government and city of Lyon for hosting SB-13. He expressed regret at the passing away of two prominent figures in climate change negotiations: Jean Ripert of France, who chaired the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee that resulted in the adoption of the FCCC in 1992; and Shukong Zhong, Special Advisor on Environmental Issues in China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. NIGERIA, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, conveyed the Group’s condolences. On logistical matters, he expressed concern at the late availability and distribution of documents, which affected developing country preparation and participation. He said all official documents for COP-6 should be available well in advance of the meeting. He noted that the lack of interpretation would disadvantage representatives of non-English speaking countries and stressed the need to achieve a balanced package of agreements that reflects the priorities of all Parties.

INFORMAL MEETINGS

MECHANISMS:

Chair Kok Kee Chow (Malaysia) introduced the consolidated text on principles, modalities, rules and guidelines on Mechanisms. INDIA, speaking for the G-77/CHINA, called for progress on other elements of the BAPA, highlighted the need for conformity with the FCCC’s emphasis on equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, and emphasized issues relating to the nature and scope of the mechanisms and supplementarity.

The Secretariat gave a presentation on the proposed CDM Reference Manual and on accreditation. He suggested that the Manual would contain chapters on baseline methodologies, monitoring, the project design document, accreditation bodies, and Operational Entity requirements. He said the Operational Entities could use the Manual to understand, inter alia, the accreditation criteria and process; validation, verification and certification processes; and approved methodologies to validate/ register project activities. On accreditation, he outlined options for institutional arrangements, including a single worldwide accreditation body, a federation/association of accreditation bodies, and mutual/multilateral recognition agreements. He identified issues for consideration, such as the use of existing accreditation structures, financing of accreditation bodies and processes, and appeal processes for designated Operational Entities.

BRAZIL, with COLOMBIA, SOUTH AFRICA, CHINA and MOROCCO, said decisions on baselines should be taken by a politically-appointed body, such as the Executive Board. SAUDI ARABIA highlighted the political nature of CDM-related decisions, urged that decisions on baselines be undertaken by the COP/MOP, and expressed reservations about the need for a Reference Manual. COLOMBIA noted the possible tendency to exaggerate baselines, and urged provision for the de-certification of Operational Entities, CHINA, with the US, expressed preference for a single worldwide accreditation body.
The REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted the issue of additionality and questioned whether the Manual would be a compilation of COP/MOP and Executive Board decisions, or would include technical advice. The US supported the Manual serving as a repository of decisions, while FRANCE, for the EU, urged that it be of a technical nature. The US agreed that decisions on baselines and related issues should be made with the approval of the Board or an appointed expert group serving under it.

SAUDI ARABIA and NORWAY cautioned against delaying necessary decisions on the CDM. The EU suggested that the role of the Board lies in the accreditation and random checking of Operational Entities.

MOROCCO highlighted the interaction between the three mechanisms. INDIA sought clarity on the nature of the Certificate on Emissions Reductions. The PHILIPPINES expressed concern with agreeing on the form of the Reference Manual before agreeing on the substance of its content. She sought clarity on the certification of project activities and emissions reduction. MAURITANIA sought clarity on the roles of the host country and the Operational Entity, and stressed the need for the host country to play the “driving role” in the process.

In a further session on the mechanisms, the INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ORGANISATION, INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FORUM and DET NORSKE VERITAS "driving role" in the process.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On an unremarkable opening day, a number of observers suggested that delegations had made a comfortable if slow-paced start, resuming from where they had left-off at SB-12 and subsequent consultations. Several delegations expressed concern at this apparent lack of urgency, given that COP-6 is now close. The strong position taken by the G-77/China over logistical considerations that might impact developing country participation caused some to question how much will be achieved prior to COP-6.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

POLICIES AND MEASURES: The week’s first informal meeting on policies and measures will be take at 10:00 am in the Amphitheatre.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: An informal session on technology transfer will be held at 10:00 am in Rhone 2.

CAPACITY BUILDING: This meeting will begin at 3:00 pm in Salon Pasteur.

LULUCF: This meeting will begin at 3:00 pm in the Amphitheatre and will consider the consolidated synthesis of proposals made by Parties on methodological issues.

COMPLIANCE: Scheduled for 5:00 pm in the Amphitheatre.

ADVERSE EFFECTS: This meeting will take place at 5:00 pm in Salon Pasteur.

ARTICLES 5, 7 & 8: This contact group will meet from 7:00 pm in Salon Pasteur to discuss guidelines under Article 7.

MECHANISMS: This meeting will take place at 7:00 pm in Auditorium Lumiére.