



HIGHLIGHTS FROM UNFCCC COP-8 WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2002

The Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP-8) and the Seventeenth Sessions of the COP's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) opened on Wednesday, 23 October, in New Delhi, India. The COP Plenary heard opening statements and addressed organizational matters. In its first meeting, the SBSTA addressed organizational matters and methodological issues, including: review of methodological work; guidelines under Protocol Articles 5 (methodological issues), 7 (communication of information) and 8 (review of information); guidelines on reporting and review of greenhouse gas inventories from Annex I Parties; special circumstances of Croatia under Article 4.6 (flexibility for countries with economies in transition); and technology transfer. The SBI considered four issues under national communications of non-Annex I Parties, including: improvement of guidelines; work of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE); consideration of the fourth compilation and synthesis of initial national communications; and provision of financial and technical support. Contact groups were convened to discuss Articles 5, 7 and 8, and the CGE.

COP PLENARY

OPENING SESSION: COP-7 President Mohamed Elyazghi (Morocco) declared COP-8 open. He drew attention to the Marrakesh Accords, noting that the process has moved to implementation.

The COP elected T.R. Baalu, Indian Minister of Environment and Forests as COP-8 President by acclamation. COP-8 President Baalu welcomed participants, noting that impacts of climate change are already being felt. He stressed implementation, and highlighted those most vulnerable to climate change and the need for adaptation. He said that a consensus-based "Delhi Declaration" addressing climate change and sustainable development would be an important COP-8 outcome.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Joke Waller-Hunter stressed the linkage between poverty and environment made at the WSSD. On facilitating information exchange between Parties, she explained that the Secretariat would do so by hosting authoritative databases of emissions, and of policies and measures (P&Ms).

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: The Secretariat noted that 185 states and 1 regional organization have ratified the UNFCCC. He said Afghanistan had deposited its instrument of ratification on 19 September. On the provisional agenda (FCCC/CP/2002/1, Add.1 and Add.2), the G-77/CHINA urged exclusion of Canada's proposal for a decision on modalities for the accounting of assigned amounts under Protocol Article 7.4 (registries) in relation to cleaner energy exports. The EU said this issue would be addressed by the SBI. He opposed Saudi Arabia's

request to include discussion on implementation of Protocol Article 2.3 (adverse effects of P&Ms) on the agenda. SAUDI ARABIA said the issue was unfinished business from the BAPA and stressed preparation of a draft decision for COP/MOP-1. CANADA emphasized the cleaner energy proposal as a priority for the future success of the Protocol. The agenda was adopted with these items, and the issue of the second review of the adequacy of commitments, held in abeyance.

President Baalu noted that consultations continued on the election of officers other than the President. He said the high-level segment would take place in the form of three consecutive roundtables on 30 and 31 October on the theme of climate change and sustainable development.

The G-77/CHINA expressed disappointment at the low level of financial resources provided by Annex I Parties, stressing that action so far has been symbolic. Supported by AUSTRALIA, for the Umbrella Group, he underscored the importance of linking sustainable development and climate change. Stressing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, CHINA said the climate regime should take into account the rising energy demands that will occur as the quality of life in developing countries improves. ZIMBABWE, for the Africa Group, called for increased support for adaptation projects.

SBSTA

OPENING SESSION: SBSTA Chair Halldór Thorgeirsson (Iceland) opened the session. Noting that the SBSTA vice-chair had resigned, he said a replacement nomination was expected from GRULAC. Tatyana Osokova (Uzbekistan) will serve as rapporteur. The SBSTA adopted the provisional agenda (FCCC/SBSTA/2002/7).

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES: Review of methodological work under the UNFCCC and Protocol: The Secretariat introduced a report on this new agenda item, highlighting five priority topics related to: greenhouse gas inventories; emissions and removals by sinks; P&Ms; mitigation and adaptation technologies; and impacts, vulnerability and adaptation of climate change.

The EU, NORWAY, SAUDI ARABIA and NEW ZEALAND supported consideration of the item beyond SBSTA-17. INDIA highlighted a recent workshop enhancing developing country capacity. The US cautioned against the Secretariat moving beyond its mandate in initiating work. Harald Dovland (Norway) will undertake consultations.

Guidelines under Protocol Articles 5, 7 and 8: On guidelines for the preparation of information required under Article 7 and for review under Article 8 and good practice guidance for Article 5.2 (adjustments), Chair Thorgeirsson highlighted outstanding issues to be addressed, including: options for the treatment of confidential data during review; training and capacity

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building for expert review teams; technical standards for data exchange between national registries, the CDM registry and the transaction log; and reporting and review of information on assigned amounts and national registries. The EU welcomed progress on options for the terms of service for lead reviewers and the training of experts. He supported a proposal on developing case studies on the calculation of adjustments under Article 5.2. The US stressed the importance of options for the treatment of confidential data and encouraged transparency of inventory data. SAUDI ARABIA said training of review experts should include developing country experts. Chair Thorgeirsson convened a contact group chaired by Helen Plume (New Zealand) and Festus Leboyera (South Africa).

On technical standards for registries under Article 7.4, Murray Ward (New Zealand) reported on the outcome of inter-sessional consultations held in New Delhi, 19-20 October 2002. He outlined agreement on: the need for a common standards framework; the need to engage technical experts; a future focus on detailed registry design; and continued collaboration with the UNFCCC Secretariat. Chair Thorgeirsson invited Ward to conduct further consultations.

Guidelines on reporting and review of greenhouse gas inventories: The Secretariat reported on the latest national greenhouse gas inventory data from Annex I Parties for 1990 to 2000. He said greenhouse gas emissions and removals data is available from 39 out of 40 Annex I Parties.

Special circumstances of Croatia under UNFCCC Article 4.6: CROATIA introduced a new technical paper. YUGOSLAVIA, opposed by the EU, said it could not support Croatia's 1990 baseline proposal. Chair Thorgeirsson asked Jim Penman (UK) to convene an informal contact group.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: Chair Thorgeirsson highlighted the annual Expert Group on Technology Transfer's (EGTT) progress report and the report on the implementation of activities under decision 4/CP.7. He also noted the EGTT's new work programme annexed to the SBSTA-16 report. EGTT Chair Jukka Uosukainen (Finland) briefed Parties on the Group's meeting preceding COP-8. He said discussions had focused on technology needs assessment, technology information sharing, capacity building, enabling environments and financial support. He welcomed the newly elected EGTT Chair William Bonsu (Ghana) and vice-chair William Bradley (US). Belgium supported an EGTT workshop on enabling environments in 2003. G-77/CHINA said technology transfer to developing countries has been ineffective. He welcomed new initiatives such as the Climate Technology Initiative and urged assistance for both mitigation and adaptation. INDIA stressed that piecemeal approaches are unsatisfactory and supported consideration of access to resources, institutional capacity building, and business community participation.

SBI

OPENING SESSION: SBI Chair Raúl Estrada-Oyuela (Argentina) opened the first meeting of SBI-17 and the agenda was adopted.

NON-ANNEX I NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Improvement of guidelines: The Secretariat introduced the proposed improved guidelines for non-Annex I national communications and the compilation of Parties' submissions. Presenting an overview of funding for the initial national communications, the GEF noted 137 countries had received US\$ 80 million, which represents 8% of total funding under its climate change focal area. The GEF expressed concern about the inestimable funding requirements of proposed guidelines for developing local emissions factors and on vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and remarked that without these funding requirements would only be marginally higher than current levels.

The EU said that LDC national adaptation programmes of action should be considered in national communications. The CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, with BANGLADESH and ERITREA, highlighted LDCs' difficulties in developing national communications and called on SBSTA to address financial support. INDIA, supported by THAILAND and IRAN, noted that the improved guidelines should not exceed the UNFCCC's reporting requirements. CANADA, with the EU, highlighted the need for demand-driven financing. TUVALU drew attention to possible negative implications of tying adaptation finance to the completion of national communications. JAPAN called for the chair's text to reflect a balance between mitigation and adaptation reporting requirements.

CGE: The Secretariat introduced Parties' submissions. CGE Chair Mahendra Kumar (Fiji) presented the final report of the CGE, stressing that the CGE process plays an important role in capacity-building through the sharing of experiences, and the evaluation of technical problems and constraints. The CGE proposed several recommendations, including that additional financial and technical resources be mobilized, and that the IPCC develop methods and tools for assessing impacts on time scales relevant to policy-makers. SBI Chair Estrada said a contact group chaired by José Romero (Switzerland) would consider the agenda item.

Compilation and synthesis: On the consideration of the fourth compilation and synthesis of initial national communications of non-Annex I countries, Chair Estrada said that the Secretariat would prepare a report to be addressed at SBI-18.

ANNEX I NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS: The Secretariat introduced the status report on the review of the third national communications. Chair Estrada said that Parties would discuss, among other issues, possible dates for the submission of the fourth national communications.

CONTACT GROUPS

ARTICLES 5, 7 AND 8: A contact group, convened by Helen Plume and Festus Luboyera met in the afternoon. The G-77/CHINA requested more time to consider the relevant documents. Delegates discussed the timing for expedited review procedures for reinstatement of eligibility to use the mechanisms. On the pending parts of the guidelines under Articles 7 and 8, the EU circulated a paper on preventing and resolving technical problems and discrepancies in the technical standards and reporting and review text. Delegates endorsed a proposal for case studies under Protocol Article 5.2. Turning to the training of experts in review teams, the Secretariat highlighted plans for a pilot training programme. On the treatment of confidential data, delegates exchanged preliminary views, and decided to forward the issue to SBSTA-18.

CGE: Parties discussed GEF support for initial national communications and the funding implications of the proposed improved guidelines late into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With both the outgoing and incoming COP Presidents stressing that the climate change process is shifting from drafting to implementation, the lack of buzz in the halls of the Vigyan Bhawan seemed to confirm that the action is elsewhere. Many conference participants remarked that this COP seemed as low-key as a meeting of the subsidiary bodies. However, other observers said they were excited to meet a multitude of Southern NGOs that are not normally at COPs.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

SBSTA: The SBSTA will meet at 10:00 am in Hall 5. They will continue their work at 3:00 pm in the Main Plenary Hall.

SBI: The SBI will convene at 10:00 am in the Main Plenary Hall, at 3:00 pm in Hall 5 and at 8:00 pm in the Main Plenary Hall.

ARTICLES 5, 7 AND 8: A contact group will convene in Hall 4 at 3:00 pm.