

A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Durban Climate Change Conference



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Events convened on Monday, 28 November 2011

EU-Africa Scientific Cooperation on Climate Change

Presented by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation



Etienne Coyette, European Commission, highlighted areas of priority in partnerships between EU and Africa as energy, climate change and scientific partnership.

Luca Perez, European Commission (EC), presented successful scientific cooperation between the EU and Africa, focusing on the relationship among climate change and water, health and adaptive strategies. Perez summarized the Framework Programme, a seven-year project jointly managed by the EU and 14 associated countries. Etienne Coyette, EC, shared experiences on progress achieved and pointed to science as key to overcoming challenges such as speeding-up implementation, providing concrete results, and mobilizing stakeholders.

Antonio Bombelli, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Climate Change (CMCC), underlined the importance of focusing studies in Africa. He shared ClimAFRICA's objectives to improve information and tools regarding adaptation and action through enhanced scientific cooperation and capacity development. Joseph Nzau Mutemi, IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre, welcomed the increase in governments' commitments on the food crisis and increasing support for climatic outlooks in real time. Jean-Marie Kileshye Onema, WaterNet, bridged the connection between climate change and economic challenge, ecosystem decline, and human development. He noted the development of a framework for monitoring and predicting a timely warning system to increase long-term resilience. He summarized WaterNet projects and initiatives, such as development of tools for water management and drought mitigation, and addressing human welfare and agricultural drought.

Christiane Gerstetter, Ecologic Institute, explained that Climate Change, Hydro-conflicts and Human Security (CLICO) is carrying out case studies in 11 countries for: addressing the relationship among climate change and conflict and human security, in a mutually beneficial collaboration; exchanging local context, knowledge of networks, and access to data. David Taylor, Trinity College Dublin, drew attention to the impact of climate change on human health. He introduced the Healthy Futures project which aims to provide science-based support for human and animal health in order to boost adaptive capacity. Jacques Andre Ndione, Quantifying Weather & Climate Impacts (QweCI) on "Healthy Futures", illustrated how effective increased understanding can improve response time.

Nebo Jovanovic, ESIR Stellenbosch, introduced the work of EUA4FOOD, aimed to address the challenge of growing more food with higher crop yield and less resources on the same land. Jovanovic articulated that past challenges in technology transfer can be avoided with a bottom up and innovation. Martha Bißmann, WIP Renewable Energies, briefly introduced a new project called AfriCAN Climate, which works to disseminate existing research and improve accessibility of knowledge on a web-based interactive platform.

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The Mandate and Activities of the Consultive Group of Experts

Organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat

Sangchan Limjirakan, Consultive Group of Expert (CGE) Chair (Thailand), recalled that COP15 decided to reconstitute the CGE for a period of three years (2010-2012). She noted that CGE provides technical advice and support for enhancing the capacity building of non-Annex I Parties (NAIP) to: prepare national communications (NC); and provide recommendations on elements to be considered in a future revision. She concluded that: the CGE mandate was ambitious and many areas have not been covered yet; timely resource availability enables timely implementation of planned activities; CGE provided useful technical input to NAIP in preparing NCs; GCE continues to liaise with other expert groups and institutions.

Patience Dampley, CGE member (Ghana), highlighted CGE activities for fulfilling its mandate, such as: reviewing and updating CGE training materials; conducting workshops; collecting information via surveys; and preparing technical papers. She noted that CGE is planning 2012 workshops in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean Regions, which will have the possibility of on-line remote participation.

Fernando Farias Elies, CGE member (Chile), highlighted discussions on a workshop in Antigua and Barbuda (21-23 March 2011) and exchanged views on possible elements to be considered in a future revision of the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of NAIP National communications. He noted that such recommendations were forwarded to SBI34, who encouraged parties to include such recommendations in future reviews. He underscored that the survey carried out by CGE enabled it to identify areas of technical problems and constraints and provide recommendation on how to address such problems.

Matti Numeling, CGE member (Finland), said that CGE recommendations related to institutional, financial, greenhouse gases (GHG) inventory software, and cross-cutting issues such as capacity building and training. Some recommendations of the workshop were: common challenges and best practices options available to NAIPs; and key elements for facilitating the development and long-term sustainability of the NC processes. He highlighted the importance of continuing the training of NAI Parties' staff. Numeling underscored the importance of informing and motivating the private sector to carry out GHG inventories. He noted that many countries have already produced their second NC and advised countries to look at their neighbors' NCs and promote south-south cooperation.

Emmanuel Dlamini, CGE member (Swaziland), noted the need to integrate climate change issues in to countries' environmental policies, and pointed out relevant mitigation and adaptation measures for each country. He highlighted the CGE provides technical advice upon request with information on existing bilateral, regional and multilateral sources of financial and technical assistance to facilitate and support the preparation of NC by NAIP.



Sangchan Limjirakan, CGE Chair, said that NAIP are still facing both tech and financial challenges in preparing their NCs.



Emmanuel Dlamini, CGE member (Swaziland), said that CGE is an ongoing activity.

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L-R: Jigme, UNFCCC Secretariat, Sangchan Limjirakan, CGE Chair (Thailand), Fernando Farias Elies, CGE member (Chile), Patience Dampley, CGE member (Ghana), Emmanuel Dlamini, CGE member (Swaziland), Matti Numeling, CGE member (Finland) reported on implementing CGE mandates.

Capturing the state of the climate system through international collaboration

Organized by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Jessica Blunden, NOAA, appeared in a video presentation to introduce the State of the Climate Report for 2010 and its major elements. She said the existing mechanisms for collaboration are essential to the success of the Report.

Michael Brewer, NOAA Satellite and Information Service, said the Report is the most comprehensive global climate information available and that monthly updates can be accessed on the internet. He shared that the purpose of the Report is to survey the changing state and the behavior of the physical climate system and our capacity to observe it. He said the Report includes annual climate data for more than 120 countries and territories across the globe. Brewer underlined that the Report includes dozens of variables in five major topics: global climate, global oceans, the tropics, the Arctic and Antarctica. He said the Report uses 41 of the 50 essential climate variables (ECVs) available, such as: air temperature, GHG emissions, Earth radiation budget, water vapor and aerosols; snow and ice cover, glacier and ice sheets; and sea surface temperature, salinity and currents. Brewer informed that the Report was written by a number of authors from 45 nations on six continents. He spoke about the geographical distribution of notable climate anomalies and events occurring around the world in 2010.

Derek Arndt, NOAA and the Report's lead editor joined the discussion via Skype and encouraged increased participation of African authors and editors.

In the ensuing discussion, participants urged for increasing the participation of African voices; and Brewer clarified that this technical report serves strictly as a scorecard of what is happening and not as a prediction service.



Michael Brewer, NOAA Satellite and Information Service, said the 2010 Report identified two climate patterns: el Niño/la Niña and Arctic oscillation that had profound effects.

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Improving Regional Cooperation for Mitigation and Adaptation to Drought

Organized by the US Delegation

Recalling the wildfire season in Texas caused by the worst possible drought in US history and referring to the partnerships with the Australian government after the multi-year droughts between 2001 and 2007 as well as the worst drought in 60 years in the Horn of Africa, Michael Brewer, NOAA, emphasized the increase in drought severity worldwide. He explained the use of different drought indicators, underscoring the intensification of droughts around the world. Brewer demonstrated the need for improved cooperation, understanding and education to develop an early warning system. He introduced the US drought portal web page as a global monitoring tool combining global remote sensing elements to promote capacity building and to provide a tool for water resource management. He concluded by calling for mitigation strategies for the impacts of drought worldwide.

Mannava Sivakumar, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), called for the composition of national drought policies, and suggested steps toward formulation of these policies. He said the absence of a coordinated drought policy leads to crisis management and single agent actions which cannot individually solve the global issue of drought. He emphasized the need for: local incentives, research priorities based on research results that address local needs, service delivery coordination, risk management that is properly addressed and improved stewardship, and recognition of the need for a safety net of emergency relief. He introduced the Compendium of Desirable Elements in National Drought Policy through which countries are encouraged to develop local mitigation strategies. He lamented the fact that only Australia possesses a drought policy, and called for an emphasis on proactive actions and new approaches to develop common understanding, varied approaches and a national framework. To a question about which actions to undertake, he grouped the policies into monitoring, assessment, and relief and response actions. He concluded that the time for action is ripe.



Mannava Sivakumar, WMO, lamented the absence of national drought policies which will lead to proactive undertakings.

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Question and answer session with the Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee (JISC)

Organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat

Mohammed Quamrul Chowdury, JISC Chair summarized the progress made by the JISC. He spoke about the current two tracks involving national and international oversight and called for streamlining this auditing process. He commented on the phenomenal growth in project submissions from many countries, which has resulted in reductions of more than 10 million tons of carbon. He emphasized the need for a measurable and transparent transition after 2012 and said that JISC looks forward to receiving more guidance from the parties attending COP17 as JI is at a crossroads.

Wolfgang Seidel, JISC Vice Chair, spoke about the recommendations from the Committee, including: merging the two tracks to have an unified one; creating a new governing body to oversee the JI process; setting standard procedures and providing a minimum set of rules; harmonizing procedures while still allowing domestic flexibility; and unifying the accreditation process for auditors. He identified key requirements of COP17 to develop: rules regarding JISC after 2012; and JISC guidance issuance in case there is no second commitment period.

In response to questions from the floor, Andrew Howard, Secretary to the CDM Executive Board and JISC member, reiterated the need for a smooth transition to any new JI operational model. He emphasized that new guidance would not apply retroactively and called for a continuation of issuance from CP1 AAUs/RMUs be allowed. He stressed the use of JI as a policy tool that can be used both for international and domestic purposes.

Several participants called for clarification of the future position of JISC and questioned the practicality of continuing the mechanism if no second commitment period was agreed.



Wolfgang Seidel, Vice-chair outlined the recommendations made by JISC to ensure smooth transition.



Mohammed Quamrul Chowdury, JISC chair said that 2011 had been a very productive year in which the mechanism has been placed on a firm footing.



Andrew Howard, UNFCCC Secretariat, Mohammed Quamrul Chowdury, JISC Chair and Wolfgang Seidel, JISC Vice-Chair reported on progress made by the Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee.

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