



TWENTY-SECOND SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE: 19-27 MAY 2005

The twenty-second sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB-22) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) take place from 19-27 May 2005, at the Maritim Hotel in Bonn, Germany. SB-22 will be the first Subsidiary Bodies meetings since the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in February 2005.

The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) will consider arrangements for the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and eleventh Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in late 2005. The SBI will also address various administrative and financial matters, including the programme budget for 2006-2007 and the Special Climate Change Fund, and matters relating to the Least Developed Countries and national communications.

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) will consider the scientific, technical and socioeconomic aspects of climate change with regards to mitigation, vulnerability and adaptation. It will also take up various methodological issues, the development and transfer of technologies, policies and measures among Annex I Parties, research needs relating to the UNFCCC, cooperation with relevant international organizations, and implementation of Protocol Article 2.3 (adverse effects of policies and measures).

As well as the official meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies, numerous side events are scheduled on a range of climate change topics.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFCCC AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

Climate change is considered to be one of the most serious threats to sustainable development, with adverse impacts expected on human health, food security, economic activity, natural resources, physical infrastructure and the environment. Global climate varies naturally but scientists agree that rising concentrations of anthropogenically produced greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are leading to changes in the climate. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the effects of climate change have already been observed, and scientific findings indicate that precautionary and prompt action is necessary.

The international political response to climate change began with the adoption of the UNFCCC in 1992. The UNFCCC sets out a framework for action aimed at stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases in order to avoid "dangerous

anthropogenic interference" with the climate system. Controlled gases include methane, nitrous oxide and, in particular, carbon dioxide. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994, and now has 189 Parties. The Parties to the UNFCCC typically convene once a year in a Conference of the Parties (COP), and twice a year in meetings of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Bodies.

THE KYOTO PROTOCOL: In December 1997, delegates at COP-3 in Kyoto, Japan, agreed to a Protocol to the UNFCCC that commits developed countries and countries making the transition to a market economy (EITs) to achieve quantified emissions reduction targets. These countries, known under the UNFCCC as Annex I Parties, agreed to reduce their overall emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels between 2008-2012 (the first commitment period), with specific targets varying from country to country. The Protocol also establishes three flexible mechanisms to assist Annex I Parties in meeting their national targets cost-effectively: an emissions trading system; joint implementation (JI) of emissions-reduction projects between Annex I Parties; and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which allows for projects to be implemented in non-Annex I Parties. Following COP-3, Parties initiated negotiations on most of the rules and operational details determining how countries will reduce emissions, and measure and assess emissions reductions. To date, 150 Parties have ratified the Protocol, including 37 Annex I Parties, representing 61.6% of 1990 Annex I greenhouse gas emissions, meeting the requirements for entry into force of the Protocol, which took place on 16 February 2005.

THE BUENOS AIRES PLAN OF ACTION: The Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) was negotiated at COP-4 in 1998, to set out a process for taking forward the provisions of the Protocol. The BAPA set COP-6 as the deadline for reaching agreement on the operational details of the Protocol and on strengthening implementation of the UNFCCC. In particular, Protocol issues to be addressed included rules relating to the flexible mechanisms, a regime for assessing Parties' compliance, accounting methods for national emissions and emissions reductions, and rules on crediting countries for carbon sinks. Issues under the UNFCCC that required resolution included questions of capacity building, the development and transfer of technology, and assistance to those developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change or to actions taken by industrialized countries to combat climate change.

Following agreement on the BAPA at COP-4, subsequent meetings attempted to reach agreement on the various elements of the work programme. In November 2000, Parties



met at COP-6 in The Hague, the Netherlands, and attempted to complete these negotiations without success. COP-6 was suspended until July 2001 when it reconvened in Bonn, Germany. Delegates held protracted consultations, and finally agreed to adopt a political decision, the Bonn Agreements. However, this political decision could only be operationalized through a package of COP decisions on specific issues such as the flexible mechanisms, compliance and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). As delegates were unable to finalize text on every decision, they agreed to forward all the draft decisions to COP-7 for final resolution.

THE MARRAKESH ACCORDS: Delegates continued discussions on the Bonn Agreements at COP-7 in October/November 2001. Following extensive negotiations, the Marrakesh Accords were adopted and have served as the basis for subsequent negotiations. The Marrakesh Accords set out building blocks for decisions under the Protocol and UNFCCC, including: the flexible mechanisms and LULUCF; rules for compliance; rules on communicating and reviewing information on emissions and removals of greenhouse gases; and issues relating to support for developing countries, including capacity building, technology transfer, responding to the adverse effects of climate change, and the establishment of three funds – the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Adaptation Fund.

COP-8 & COP-9: Delegates met at COP-8 in October/November 2002, and again at COP-9 in December 2003, to negotiate decisions for implementing the Marrakesh Accords. Among other things, Parties agreed on rules and procedures for the CDM Executive Board (EB), the body designated to supervise the CDM, and modalities and procedures for afforestation and reforestation (A&R) activities under the CDM. Parties also discussed how to integrate findings of the IPCC's Third Assessment Report into the work of the UNFCCC, agreeing on two new agenda items on adaptation and on mitigation.

SB-20: In June 2004, delegates met in Bonn at the twentieth sessions of SBI and SBSTA. Among other things, SBSTA-20 considered small-scale A&R CDM project activities and good practice guidance (GPG) on LULUCF, and held two in-session workshops on adaptation, and on mitigation. SBI-20 addressed the UNFCCC's financial mechanism and arrangements for intergovernmental meetings.

COP-10: COP-10 was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 6-18 December 2004. The meeting involved lengthy negotiations on how to engage on commitments to combat climate change in the post-2012 period. The Kyoto Protocol requires Parties to begin considering the post-2012 period by 2005. Delegates eventually agreed to hold a Seminar of Governmental Experts prior to SB-22 in May 2005. However, the terms of reference for the Seminar did not refer to the post-2012 period or new commitments. Rather, they stated that the purpose of the Seminar was to promote "an informal exchange of information on: (a) actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to assist Parties to continue to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change; and (b) policies and measures adopted by their respective governments that support implementation of their existing commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol."

Delegates also agreed on a package on adaptation – the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures – supporting further implementation of measures to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, while also addressing calls for economic diversification for countries affected by the global community's response measures to deal with climate change.

In addition, Parties addressed and adopted numerous decisions and conclusions on issues such as technology transfer, land-use change and forestry, the UNFCCC's financial mechanism, and education, training and public awareness. Some issues remain unresolved, and will be taken up again in 2005. These include negotiations on the LDC Fund, the SCCF, national communications from developing countries (non-Annex I Parties), and Protocol Article 2.3 (adverse effects of policies and measures).

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION: The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held from 18-22 January 2005, in Kobe, Japan. Negotiators agreed on a ten-year plan to build the resilience of countries and communities to disasters, and adopted a statement on the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami aimed at reducing the risk from future disasters.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE STABILIZATION OF GREENHOUSE GASES: This symposium, held from 1-3 February 2005, in Exeter, UK, sought to advance scientific understanding of and encourage scientific debate on the long-term implications of climate change, the relevance of stabilization goals, and technological options to reach such goals.

THIRD EARTH OBSERVATION SUMMIT: This Summit, held in Brussels, Belgium, on 16 February 2005, resulted in governments endorsing a 10-year implementation plan for the development of a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). Delegates also adopted a communiqué supporting tsunami and multi-hazard warning systems within the context of the GEOSS.

G8 ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT MINISTERS MEETING: The Environment and Development Ministers of the G8 countries met from 17-18 March 2005, in Derbyshire, UK. On the issue of climate change, ministers noted Africa's particular vulnerability and agreed that urgent action is necessary to help the vulnerable adapt. They also recognized the need to increase access to reliable and affordable energy services for Africans living in poverty.

UNFCCC MEETINGS: A number of UNFCCC events have taken place since COP-10, including a regional workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean on education, training and public awareness (30 March to 1 April 2005, Montevideo, Uruguay); a workshop on national systems (11-12 April 2005, Bonn, Germany); a meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Non-Annex I Parties (14-15 April 2005, Maputo, Mozambique); and two meetings of the Executive Board of the CDM (23-25 February and 11-13 May 2005, Bonn). Several pre-session meetings were also held in Bonn in the days leading up to SB-22, including a meeting of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (12-14 May 2005), informal consultations on the LDC Fund (13-14 May 2005), and consultations on registry systems (13-14 May 2005). For more information on these meetings, visit: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2005.

SEMINAR OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS: A Seminar of Governmental Experts was also held prior to SB-22, on 16-17 May 2005, in Bonn. The decision to hold a Seminar was taken by Parties at COP-10. The Seminar involved an exchange of information on actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to help Parties continue to develop effective responses to climate change; and on policies and measures that support implementation of existing commitments under the UNFCCC and the Protocol. For the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* report on the Seminar, visit: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/sb22/>.