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SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Guidance adopted by UNFCCC COP 17 and SBI 36, and GEF's response	1
Initial elements of a Global Support Program for National Adaptation Plans	3
Next steps	5
Annex I: Initial guidelines for the formulation of national adaptation plans by least developed country Parties	6

INTRODUCTION

1. At its sixteenth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) decided to establish a process to enable least developed countries (LDC) to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAP). This process would build on their experience in preparing and implementing national adaptation programmes of action (NAPA), as a means of identifying and addressing medium- and long-term adaptation needs. Other developing countries were also invited to employ the modalities formulated to support NAPs. (decision 1/CP.16, paragraphs 15-16¹)
2. At its seventeenth session, the COP requested the GEF, as an operating entity of the financial mechanism, through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), to consider how to support the NAP process in LDCs. COP 17 also invited the operating entities of the financial mechanism, as well as other bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations, to provide financial and technical support to other developing countries to carry out national adaptation planning measures. (decision 5/CP.17, paragraphs 22 and 31²).
3. Upon invitation by COP 17, the GEF Secretariat submitted information to the UNFCCC Secretariat on February 13, 2012, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its thirty-sixth session, outlining how the GEF, through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), could enable activities as part of the NAP process in LDCs (FCCC/SBI/2012/MISC.3³). The GEF provided further information in its report to COP 18 (FCCC/CP/2012/6, September 2012⁴).
4. This document reports on the steps taken by the GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with LDC Parties and its Agencies, and in coordination with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), in response to decision 5/CP.17. In particular, the document introduces initial elements of a Global Support Program (GSP) as a means to support the launch of the NAP process in developing countries.

GUIDANCE ADOPTED BY UNFCCC COP 17 AND SBI 36, AND GEF'S RESPONSE

5. With respect to financial arrangements for the formulation and implementation of NAPs, UNFCCC COP 17 provided the following guidance, (decision 5/CP.17):

21. *Urges* developed country Parties to mobilize financial support for the national adaptation plan process for least developed country Parties through bilateral and multilateral channels, including through the Least Developed Countries Fund, in accordance with decision 1/CP.16;

22. *Requests* the Global Environment Facility, as an operating entity of the financial mechanism, through the Least Developed Countries Fund, to consider how to

¹ Available on <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>.

² Available on http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/national_adaptation_plans/application/pdf/decision_5_cp_17.pdf.

³ Available on <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/sbi/eng/misc03.pdf>.

⁴ *Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, available on <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/cop18/eng/06.pdf>.

enable activities for the preparation of the national adaptation plan process for the least developed countries Parties, while maintaining progress for the least developed countries work programme, which includes the national adaptation programmes of action;

23. *Also invites* United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and other relevant organizations, as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies, to support the national adaptation plan process in the least developed countries and, where possible, to consider establishing support programmes for the national adaptation plan process within their mandates, as appropriate, which could facilitate financial and technical support to least developed countries [...]; [...]

25. *Also invites* the Global Environment Facility, as an operating entity of the financial mechanism for the operation of the Least Developed Countries Fund, to submit information to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, through the secretariat, by 13 February 2012, on how they could enable activities undertaken as part of the national adaptation plan process in the least developed countries, [...] for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation at its thirty-sixth session; [...]

31. *Invites* the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention, bilateral and multilateral organizations and other institutions as appropriate, to provide financial and technical support to developing country Parties [that are not least developed countries] to plan, prioritize and implement their national adaptation planning measures, consistent with decision 1/CP.16 and relevant provisions of the Convention;

6. Annexed to decision 5/CP.17, the COP adopted initial guidelines for the NAP process in LDCs⁵. The guidelines outline the principle elements of the process, as well as potential activities to be carried out at each stage. According to the guidelines, the NAP process would rely on an initial phase of (i) laying the groundwork and assessing the gaps for medium and long-term adaptation planning and action. This would be followed by a (ii) preparatory phase, including assessments of impacts, vulnerabilities and appropriate adaptation measure, as well as stakeholder consultations. The preparatory phase would support the elaboration of (iii) implementation strategies, including prioritization, coordination and capacity building. Finally, the initial guidelines identify a need for regular (iv) reporting, monitor and review of the NAP process and its outputs. (decision 5/CP.17)

7. In its initial response to decision 5/CP.17, the GEF described the modalities and experience it holds that could be relevant for supporting the NAP process in LDCs, as described in the initial objectives, principles and guidelines provided by COP 17. The GEF also welcomed further guidance from the COP to clarify whether enabling activities in support of NAPs are to be adopted in the LDC work programme and whether such activities would be prioritized for financing under the LDCF. Finally, the submission noted that additional, designated contributions to the LDCF would be necessary to allow the GEF to support the NAP process in LDCs in addition to the implementation of NAPAs.

8. SBI 36 welcomed the submission by the GEF and “reiterated the urging of developed country Parties by the COP to mobilize financial support for the NAP process for LDC Parties through bilateral and multilateral channels, including through the [LDCF], in accordance with decision 1/CP.16 and 5/CP.17” (FCCC/SBI/2012/L.7, paragraph 4⁶). SBI also “reaffirmed the invitation by the COP to the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention,

⁵ See Annex.

⁶ Available on <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/sbi/eng/107.pdf>.

bilateral and multilateral organizations and other institutions, as appropriate, to provide financial and technical support to developing country parties [also including non-LDCs] to plan, prioritize and implement their national adaptation planning measures” (FCCC/SBI/2012/L.7, paragraph 14).

9. In its report to COP 18, the GEF further elaborated on its initial submission to SBI 36, (FCCC/CP/2012/6, September 2012):

“ As a first step, the GEF, in collaboration with its Agencies, the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), the UNFCCC Secretariat, and, once operational, the Adaptation Committee, will launch a support program that corresponds to the foundational elements of the NAP process, defined as “laying the groundwork and addressing gaps” in the initial guidelines for the formulation of NAPs by LDC Parties, annexed to Decision 5/CP.17. In particular, this program will strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders in LDCs to effectively carry out subsequent stages of the NAP process.

The GEF notes the invitation by the COP and the SBI to support the NAP process in developing countries that are not LDCs. As the entity entrusted with the management of the [Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)], the GEF holds a mandate to finance adaptation measures in all developing country parties to the UNFCCC. Through projects and programs financed under the SCCF, the GEF has also gained relevant experience of adaptation planning and implementation in non- LDCs. Yet, additional contributions to the SCCF would be necessary to allow the GEF to support the NAP process in non-LDCs.”

INITIAL ELEMENTS OF A GLOBAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS

10. The GEF holds considerable experience in supporting enabling activities to allow developing country Parties to meet their obligations under the UNFCCC. The GEF has financed the National Communications Support Program, which has assisted countries in completing the national communication process, while enhancing their institutional capacities to carry out assessments and planning in the area of low-carbon, climate-resilient development.

11. Through the LDCF, the GEF has supported two initial support programs as well as the preparation of NAPAs in 49 LDCs, and approved financing for 82 NAPA implementation projects and programs, as of October 12, 2012. As a first step towards NAPA preparation, two support programs⁷ were approved under the LDCF, as medium-sized projects, with the aim of (i) informing participants and increasing their awareness of applying the NAPA guidelines using concrete examples; (ii) encouraging discussion among the various players involved and promoting their proactive commitment to the NAPA process; and (iii) providing concrete support to UNFCCC Focal Points in LDCs to successfully implement their NAPA projects. The two projects were instrumental in enabling the effective and timely preparation of NAPAs.

12. Drawing on the experience of the National Communications Support Program and the NAPA process, and in accordance with the initial guidelines provided in decision 5/CP.17, the

⁷The programs were presented in the Council document, *Operation of the Least Developed Countries Trust Fund for Climate Change* (GEF/C.21/5, April 2003). The two medium-sized projects were approved in April and September 2003 respectively, as *Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to Implement the UNFCCC8/CP8 Decision* (LDCF grant: \$693,744) and *Technical Assistance to Francophone LDCs to Implement the UNFCCC8/CP8 Decision* (LDCF grant: \$234,350).

GEF, in collaboration with LDC Parties and its Agencies, and in coordination with LEG, has facilitated the development of a GSP that would support the launch of the NAP process in developing countries through regional workshops that bring together key stakeholders from each eligible country for the purpose of training and stocktaking. The GSP could serve as a vehicle for introducing and disseminating the technical guidelines for the NAP process, currently being developed by LEG, as well as other relevant guidance, methodologies, tools and resources that assist developing countries in carrying out the subsequent stages of the NAP process in an effective and timely manner. Moreover, the GSP could help ensure that the NAP process involves a wide array of national stakeholders and development partners at an early stage.

13. Importantly, recognizing that climate change adaptation goes beyond the technical domain of any single line ministry or government agency, national coordinating bodies would be identified and engaged in all activities carried out under the GSP, notably ministries of finance and planning. The GSP would build on and complement, rather than duplicate other forms of technical assistance provided to countries. This would in part be ensured through close coordination with LEG, which is carrying out a survey to identify the specific support needs countries have with respect to each step of the NAP process. In addition to introducing and disseminating the technical guidelines prepared by LEG, the GSP would assist countries by drawing on, synthesizing and making available relevant guidance, methodologies and tools, rather than by developing new ones.

14. Recognizing that developing countries find themselves in very different stages of adaptation planning and implementation, the GSP would allow countries to embark on the NAP process in a flexible manner, taking account of their country-specific needs and circumstances, utilizing different sources of finance, and accommodating additional and more precise guidance by the COP. Some countries may have carried out most activities associated with the initial stages of the process, but may require additional support in specific areas, such as monitoring, reporting and review. Others may require more substantial support in launching the NAP process and laying the groundwork. The GSP would introduce relevant sources of additional support for each stage of the process, while encouraging stakeholders in countries to take ownership of the process from its very inception.

Key considerations for supporting the NAP process in LDCs

15. In the context of LDCs, the GEF and its Agencies are well placed to ensure that the NAP process builds on and is fully coordinated with the NAPA experience as well as ongoing and future efforts towards NAPA implementation, as envisaged in decision 1/CP.16 (see paragraph 1 above). The GSP would encourage LDCs to take stock of and assess the NAPA process, and it would introduce relevant methodologies, tools and resources for the purpose. The GSP would also provide a platform for LDCs to share information about relevant experiences, best practices and lessons learned from the preparation and implementation of NAPAs.

Key considerations for supporting the NAP process in non-LDC developing countries

16. For other, non-LDC developing countries, recognizing their diverse needs and capacities in the area of adaptation planning and implementation, the GSP would place considerable emphasis on taking stock of prior and ongoing initiatives; carried out by national governments, multi-lateral or bilateral agencies, NGOs or other institutions; to strengthen technical and institutional capacities for medium and long-term adaptation planning. Moreover, in non-LDCs,

the GSP would focus more on laying the foundation for effective, private sector involvement in climate change adaptation. Any training provided under the GSP would recognize that the technical guidelines for the NAP process currently under preparation by LEG, while relevant for any developing country, are developed with the specific needs and context of LDCs in mind.

NEXT STEPS

17. The GEF, in collaboration with LDC Parties and its Agencies, and in coordination with LEG, will continue to assist and to facilitate the development of the proposed GSP, ready to respond to additional and more specific guidance provided by COP 18. LEG aims to introduce its technical guidelines for the NAP process in LDCs at COP 18 in December 2012, and the GSP will take account of the feedback provided by Parties, as well as other stakeholders, on these guidelines, including the appropriate ways to introduce, disseminate and apply them in launching the NAP process.

ANNEX I: INITIAL GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMULATION OF NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS BY LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

I. Introduction

1. The elements described in paragraphs 2–6 below are indicative of the activities that can be undertaken in the development of national adaptation plans (NAPs). The planning of such activities will depend on national circumstances and should be determined by least developed country Parties.

II. Elements of national adaptation plans

A. Laying the groundwork and addressing gaps

2. Activities undertaken under this element would be planned with a view to identifying weaknesses and gaps in enabling environments, and addressing them as necessary, to support the formulation of comprehensive adaptation plans, programmes and policies, through, inter alia:

(a) Identification and assessment of institutional arrangements, programmes, policies and capacities for overall coordination and leadership on adaptation;

(b) Assessment of available information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, measures taken to address climate change, and gaps and needs, at the national and regional levels;

(c) Comprehensive, iterative assessments of development needs and climate vulnerabilities.

B. Preparatory elements

3. In developing NAPs, consideration would be given to identifying specific needs, options and priorities on a country-driven basis, utilizing the services of national and, where appropriate, regional institutions, and to the effective and continued promotion of participatory and gender-sensitive approaches coordinated with sustainable development objectives, policies, plans and programmes. Activities may include the following:

(a) Design and development of plans, policies and programmes by considering decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 14(a), to address the gaps and needs referred to in paragraph 2 above;

(b) Assessments of medium- and long-term adaptation needs, and, as appropriate, development needs and climate vulnerabilities;

(c) Activities aimed at integrating climate change adaptation into national and subnational development and sectoral planning;

(d) Participatory stakeholder consultations;

(e) Communication, awareness-raising and education.

C. Implementation strategies

4. Activities carried out as part of the implementation strategies would take into consideration the following:

(a) Prioritizing work according to development needs and climate change vulnerability and risk;

(b) Strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks to support adaptation;

(c) Training and coordination at the sectoral and subnational levels;

(d) Public dissemination of information on the national adaptation plan process, to be made available to the public and to the UNFCCC secretariat;

(e) Considering other relevant multilateral frameworks and international programmes and initiatives, with a view to building on and complementing existing adaptation planning.

D. Reporting, monitoring and review

5. These activities, including national adaptation plan documents, could be included in national strategies and plans, as appropriate.

6. Under this element, Parties should undertake a regular review, at intervals that they determine:

(a) To address inefficiencies, incorporating the results of new assessments and emerging science and reflect lessons learned from adaptation efforts;

(b) To monitor and review the efforts undertaken, and provide information in their national communications on the progress made and the effectiveness of the national adaptation plan process.

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