



Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

TWENTY-FIRST SPREP MEETING

Madang, Papua New Guinea
6 – 10 September 2010

Agenda Item 9.2.3: Directions in the UNFCCC Process

Purpose

1. To update the Meeting on the support provided by the Secretariat to Members and on developments relating to climate change negotiations.

Background

2. Pacific Leaders have identified climate change as the single greatest challenge of our time. Eight Pacific heads of state attended the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009 together with ministers and experts from all PICs, to send a clear message about the importance of climate change for our region. Pacific delegations delivered a strong message regarding the current and predicted impacts of climate change on their peoples, including sea level rise, salt water intrusion in their drinking water and root crops, more extreme and frequent weather events, and coral bleaching. The delegations emphasised the need for immediate global action on mitigation and massively scaled up financing for adaptation.

3. Pacific Leaders have designated SPREP as the lead CROP agency in coordinating and facilitating regional climate change policies and implementing actions to respond to climate change impacts. SPREP is implementing a number of programmes focused on adaptation (in particular the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change – PACC – Project since 2009), mitigation (in particular the Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy – PIGGAREP – Project since 2007), support for meteorological services and climate change science (through support for the Regional Meteorological Services Directors RMSD, the Global Climate Observing System known as PI-GCOS and from 2010 the Global Ocean Observing System or PI-GOOS), climate change awareness (through media training and the Pacific Year of Climate Change campaign in 2009) and various forms of support for Pacific Island Countries at relevant regional policy forums through the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (PCCR) and at international forums such as the UNFCCC.

4. SPREP is also supporting Pacific Island Members in the context of the international climate change negotiations under the FCCC, and has continued to provide technical input, briefings and support to assist during the FCCC meetings.



FCCC Negotiations

5. PICs actively participated and negotiated for stronger commitments under the FCCC during the 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in December 2009. While the results from Copenhagen were greeted with general disappointment in the region, opportunities remain as the negotiations continue in 2010. In April, agreement was reached to continue working on the texts from Copenhagen, by requesting the Chairperson to consolidate the various documents, including the Copenhagen Accord, into a more manageable format. This text was the subject of intensive discussions during the May/June FCCC meetings in Bonn. Analysis by the Secretariat shows that most of the priorities identified by the PICs have been captured in the new text. However, these are for the most part in bracketed sections of the text, signifying that they are there as options.

6. Negotiations will continue with two more sessions scheduled between June and the 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Cancun, Mexico. One session was provisionally set for Bonn in early August. Much is at stake for the PICs in the negotiations, as the Kyoto Protocol commitment period expires in 2012, and a certain amount of time will be required before any new agreements are ratified by a sufficient number of Parties. The Secretariat will continue to support the PICs in the negotiations.

7. The Secretariat carried out a detailed analysis of the AWG-LCA text prior to the FCCC May/June meetings. A summary of the analysis is included as Attachment 1. During the May/June meetings a process was set in place where the Chair of the AWG-LCA posed a set of targeted questions under each of the headings in her revised text. PICs working through AOSIS provided targeted responses, seeking to highlight Pacific concerns and to give direction to the Chair as to the preferred option or emphasis in a given section. On most subjects there was full consensus between PIC and AOSIS positions. On a few topics, such as consideration of bunker fuels for aviation and maritime transport, a neutral AOSIS position was crafted that would allow individual delegations to raise their national concerns. The session benefited from active participation by PIC delegations.

8. The subsidiary bodies (implementation and science/technology) met to work on the regular functions of the FCCC, while the ad hoc working groups continued deliberations as agreed in Bonn in April. The subsidiary bodies had a rather daunting agenda, as many of the items had been postponed because of the heavy Copenhagen agenda. The initiative of having the contact group chairs develop conclusions before their groups met to try and speed up the work did not produce the desired results in some instances, as some chairs were not well attuned to the concerns of the Parties. The slowed down pace of the AWGs also contributed to the overall perception of downplaying expectations for Cancun, particularly as a key science compendium was blocked towards the end of the meeting. Procedural and operational obstacles are now in place to hamper Parties' ability to make more than framing or enabling decisions in Cancun, with a view to further work in 2011.

9. Towards the end of the May/June session the AWG-LCA Chair issued a draft of a new text, seeking reactions from Parties, without engaging in substantive discussions. When this new text was further streamlined down to 21 pages, most PIC delegates felt that too many of the key AOSIS positions had been diminished or lost, while some issues on which there was little consensus had been retained (e.g. response measures within the adaptation section of the text in addition to having a separate section on response measures). During the closing plenary these views were expressed by the Chairman of AOSIS, highlighting in particular the deletion of key references to giving preferential funding treatment to SIDS and LDCs. The Chair of AWG-LCA has invited further comments and suggestions before the new draft text is officially launched, and SPREP will be supporting PICs in this regard. Once the revised draft text is launched, SPREP will endeavour to provide further technical analysis to the PIC delegations.

10. In terms of substance, mitigation remains one of the trickiest issues. The level of ambition reflected in the pledges for mid-term emission reductions by Annex I countries does not match the science, as AOSIS and PICs have repeatedly pointed out. While there remains a need for engaging the non-Kyoto Parties and ensuring the comparability of Annex I countries' emission reductions efforts and agreeing on what happens to the mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol, it is still very difficult to settle on a legal framework for mitigation and monitoring, review and verification that is acceptable to both developed and developing countries. Cooperation is needed between the separate discussions on mitigation in AWG-LCA and AWG-KP, and AOSIS and some Latin American countries supported the proposal for common space discussions. The proposal brought shifting positions in developing countries to light, with a number of smaller and vulnerable countries now supporting a limited construction of common space between the two tracks to address mitigation by Annex I countries. Some larger developing countries opposed it, calling it a step towards the death of the Protocol, reminiscent of the G77 Chair in Copenhagen. Annex I Parties to the Protocol generally agreed with common space as some progress in the right direction, but as one Party objected, progress was not yet forthcoming. This may be reflective of domestic constraints to discussing specific emissions reductions targets at this stage. Nevertheless, this could be a positive forum for airing differences and working towards science driven targets.

11. The Secretariat will continue to support the PIC delegations in the negotiations, in particular to assist with information on the urgency for PICs to achieve a meaningful legally binding agreement at Cancun, despite the significant obstacles that have been erected against such an outcome. Discussions with PIC focal points and climate change delegates have also underlined the need to establish a higher profile for PIC vulnerabilities in the FCCC negotiations. This could be attained through an enhanced media and communications programme, but unfortunately resources have not yet been secured for this purpose, unlike in 2008 and 2009. SPREP will also respond, as resources and scheduling permitting, to requests it has received for continuing the negotiations skills strengthening process, to convene preparatory sessions prior to the key FCCC meetings, and for technical support to various meetings that may be hosted in the region.

SPREP climate change team

12. SPREP will continue to strengthen its delivery of climate change support to the region by expanding its level of staffing for climate change work. Additional staff are being engaged for PIGGAREP and PACC, as well as through the engagement of a Commonwealth Secretariat funded Environmental Resource Economist and a Knowledge Management Officer. A PI-GOOS officer will be joining the post transferred from SOPAC, and as outlined in a separate paper, a Meteorology and Climatology Adviser may be brought on board.

Recommendations

13. The Meeting is invited to :

- **note** the various ways in which the Secretariat is supporting Members to prepare for and participate in negotiations under the UNFCCC;
 - **note** the efforts to strengthen the climate change team at SPREP and endorse the recommendations on the establishment of PCCR Working Groups as a means for more effective delivery on climate change in the region and enhancing interactions between SPREP, CROP and national climate change focal points;
 - **endorse** the approach taken by SPREP in support of PICs and undertake to support and work with SPREP in the UNFCCC process, including the delivery of negotiations training and preparatory meetings for the FCCC; and
 - **provide** support to the development of communications tools such as national climate change profiles, as well as any other suggestions as to how to strengthen support to PICs in the FCCC negotiations process.
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