

## Opening statement

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As preceding speakers have mentioned, adaptation has always been an important issue, but has progressively increased in prominence, both in the context of the IPCC as well as that of the negotiations. My input to you today is to outline how our work on adaptation has its basis in the source mandates on climate change, namely in the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol.

It was mentioned this morning that mitigation is the best form of adaptation. In fact, the link between mitigation and adaptation is enshrined in the ultimate objective of the Convention, in its Article 2, which mentions both mitigation and adaptation. It says that the objective of this instrument is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous interference with the climate system.... and that this level should be attained in a timeframe that would allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change.

We now know from the scientific assessments that regardless of the extent of greenhouse gas mitigation to which the World will be able to commit, there will always be a residual level of climate change impacts that will create a need for us to adapt. So there is no way to avoid adaptation.

The Climate Change Convention contains an Article on mandatory commitments, which is Article 4. In that Article, there five different mandates for adaptation.

In subparagraph 4.1 (b), the Convention mandates all Parties, developing and developed, to formulate, implement, publish and regularly update, national and where appropriate regional programmes containing adaptation measures. This is a binding commitment under the Convention and applies to each and every Party, rich and poor.

In subparagraph (e) of the same Article, the Convention mandates all Parties to cooperate in preparing for adaptation to climate change impacts; and it singles out several areas for which integrated plans need to be developed and elaborated. These areas comprise coastal zone management, water resources and agriculture, and the protection and rehabilitation of regions affected by drought, desertification and floods, particularly in Africa; and here we see a clear linkage with the objectives of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and a good case for synergistic implementation across environmental conventions.

This covers the first two basic mandatory commitments for adaptation in the Convention, one is for the formulation of national adaptation plans (and regional ones where appropriate), and the other for cooperation between countries on adaptation.

An additional mandate for all Parties, and one which is often overlooked, is that which appears under subparagraph 4.1 (f). This has two parts. The first part mandates all Parties to take climate change considerations, including adaptation of course, into account in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, which is basically what we now call mainstreaming. The second part says that while you are doing this you need to minimize the adverse effects of these

adaptation measures on the economy, on public health and on the quality of the environment. This means that the Convention has taken a precaution against implementing adaptation measures that may have harmful side effects, including on the environment. This would cover some of the measures we now call maladaptation, such as subsidizing insurance premiums for settlers of vulnerable areas, which could encourage even further population of such areas and accordingly increased losses.

Article 4.8 of the Convention also includes a more operational mandate on adaptation for all Parties. It says that the Parties shall consider actions related to funding, insurance and transfer of technology to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing country Parties arising from the adverse effects of climate change. We have just heard from the preceding speaker about the complexities associated with funding and technology issues in our negotiations. Insurance is yet to be handled in an operational manner.

So this basically summarizes what the Convention has instructed all Parties to do – five elements – implementing national and regional adaptation plans, cooperating on adaptation, mainstreaming, avoiding maladaptation, and implementing actions relating to funding, insurance and technology transfer.

Now if we move on to the commitments relating to providing support from developed to developing countries on adaptation, we will see that mandate in Article 4.4, which says that the developed country Parties shall assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting costs of adaptation to those adverse effects. Similarly, in Article 4.5 of the Convention, developed countries are mandated to promote technology transfer to developing countries, as well as to support endogenous capacities and technologies of developing countries, which is particularly relevant to our theme of community based adaptation.

Moving on to the Kyoto Protocol, one can safely say that there is no adaptation focus there. Worthy of mention though, is that the provisions of Article 4.8 of the Convention are mirrored to a large extent in Article 3.14 of the Protocol, which states that COP/MOP 1 shall consider what actions are necessary to minimize the adverse effects of climate change referred to in paragraph 4.8 of the Convention, including the establishment of funding, insurance and transfer of technology. Similarly, Article 10 (b) of the Kyoto Protocol also mirrors the mandate under Article 4.1 (b) of the Convention.

Where are we now in the implementation of all these confusing mandates on adaptation? The COP, at its tenth session, adopted the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures, which is a first step upon which more ambitious further action will hopefully be built. It is probably fair to say, albeit its being ironic, that the least developed countries have made the longest stride towards adaptation. Almost all LDCs are now preparing national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) to address their urgent and immediate adaptation needs. And the LDC Expert Group, which provides technical support to the NAPA process, is seeking to identify where regional-level action can be taken. The NAPA methodology contains an inherent element of mainstreaming adaptation with existing poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies, as well as synergistic implementation with other environmental actions, particularly those relating to desertification and biodiversity.

However, much of the talk surrounding cooperation on adaptation focuses on a North-South transfer of resources for adaptation, and there is very little effort in our process to benefit from existing community-level adaptation measures in the South. The use of microfinance and micro-insurance in Bangladesh is surely an example that can be very beneficial to other countries. The response by Bangladesh to help the countries affected by the recent tsunami is also a very good manifestation of the potential benefits of such cooperation. Bangladesh has sent disaster relief personnel to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. And with the long-standing experience of Bangladesh in post-flood recovery, it has accumulated invaluable experience and knowledge on how communities can best recover after disaster strikes.

Hopefully, this workshop will help us all understand better the value of community-level adaptation and its potential as a seed for effective South-South cooperation in the field of adaptation to climate change.