

### 3rd meeting of the Adaptation Committee: On con-solid-ated grounds?

From 18 to 20 June the Adaptation Committee (AC) met for the third time. The meeting took place in Bonn, back-to-back with the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF). This very much owed to the fact that the issue of coherence of adaptation-related matters under the Convention and collaboration with adaptation-relevant bodies and institutional arrangements was key on the agenda of the AC. Other issues for the third AC meeting included:

- Activities relating to means of implementation for adaptation
- Regional institutions and UN agencies communicating current support for adaptation
- List of adaptation experts
- Gathering of up-to-date information on adaptation
- Database or clearing-house for information on national adaptation planning
- Modalities and guidelines for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) for non-LDC developing countries
- Workshop on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of adaptation
- Work resulting from the work programme on loss and damage
- Overview report and thematic reports
- Communication, information and outreach strategy
- Annual Adaptation Forum

#### Broader context: Providing coherence and linking to UNFCCC processes

In terms of underpinning coherence of adaptation-related matters the third AC meeting brought interesting new insights as Diann Black-Layne, Co-Chair of the SCF, presented several ideas of how both committees can jointly work towards more coherence. Her ideas included a joint task force on improving MRV of adaptation finance, including the development of a common understanding what exactly can be classified and labeled as adaptation finance, the AC to feed into the SCF's bi-annual report and the fifth review of the financial mechanism, a placeholder for adaptation finance (to be fed jointly with the AC) in the draft omnibus decision on finance, and potential cooperation in the context of both committee's annual forums.

Building on those ideas AC members decided to prepare an input paper laying out some more concrete ideas on how a joint working group or task force between the AC and the SCF as well as other relevant bodies such as the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) could be set up and what other activities could be jointly pursued in the future. This is to be seen in the context of the fourth function of the AC to *"provide guidance on means to incentivize the implementation of adaptation actions, including finance, technology and capacity-building and other ways to enable climate-resilient development and reduce vulnerability, including to the operating entities of the financial mechanism"* as stated in decision 1/CP.16.<sup>1</sup> So far, the AC was only able to decide limited activities that would achieve this.

#### Gaining grounds: M&E Workshop and the Annual Adaptation Forum

A similar important issue was the upcoming M&E workshop. Although the AC used a fair amount of time to discuss process matters, AC members agreed to use the workshop to bring together M&E experts from around the globe, aiming at collecting the insights and recommendations from the meeting and feature them in the AC report to the COP for the political process to take them further. The workshop is the first stand-alone event organized by the AC, and therefore issues such as general attendance, representation of AC member at the meeting, and the timing with the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting had to be tackled, providing precedent for further meetings.

Ultimately, the AC entrusted the secretariat to send out invitations (incl. to representatives from the TEC, LEG, SCF, World Bank, etc.) and to prepare a background paper under the guidance of the chair and vice-chair. In order for the workshop to yet steer progress the AC should consider methodologies that apply participatory monitoring approaches on the local level since governments will aim to incentivize and also benefit from them. Moreover the organizers need to do extra effort to feature practice and experience endogenous of developing

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<sup>1</sup> <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf>

countries – both to avoid duplications with existing workshops that take place e.g. under the OECD but also to allow ownership and acceptability for the political recommendations that follow from this process.

The discussion on the upcoming **Annual Adaptation Forum**, scheduled for COP19, centred around a few but critical issues. Generally, the Forum agreed to broadly increase the spotlight for adaptation and the urgency to act, reaching beyond the circles of UNFCCC adaptation negotiators. While debates on the overall topic of the forum evolved, disagreement over the exact timing of the forum as well as its format prevailed until the end.

For its fourth meeting a key task for the AC will be to put together an inspiring program that draws participants from different disciplines, institutions and government levels. AC members will also soon have to decide how to best incorporate eminent persons, high-level ministers and the media, carefully orchestrated with the COP organizers. It would also be beneficial to frame the forum in terms of showing the positive contribution that the UNFCCC (incl. the AC) has provided on adaptation and potentially outlining the implications of a delay on mitigation ambition for adaptation actions. Lastly, the AC should already look ahead and strategically develop ideas for an innovative concept for the following years, potentially creating some sort of joint forum series with other UNFCCC bodies.

#### Next in line

As stated in its work plan the AC aims to produce an "State of Adaptation Report" (overview report) and annual periodic reports summarizing existing adaptation practices and pointing to future developments, challenges as well as gaps. A decision was taken to issue the overview report in 2015. While an earlier date would be more beneficial for the political calendar in informing the wider UNFCCC and post-MDG negotiations, arguments prevailed that the report should really be the final flag-ship delivered by the AC at the end of the three year work-plan. As a result, the theme and level of effort for the annual periodic report in 2014 needs to be carefully set to balance some of the drawbacks that come from a late launch of the bigger "State of Adaptation Report".

Regarding the invitation towards regional institutions and UN agencies to communicate current support for adaptation, the AC entrusted the secretariat with formulating a letter to be send out together with a template for interacting with respective institutions. On the subject of the outreach strategy the secretariat will develop factsheets and a FAQ document, fed by inputs from AC members. Concerning the database for information on national adaptation planning as well as modalities and guidelines for NAPs for non-LDCs, the AC decided to partner with the LEG. For the former this will be through the NAPs Central while for the guidelines the AC appointed a small group to review methodologies together with the LEG until the fourth AC meeting.

#### Looking ahead

Several items on the agenda were identified to be less immediate and/or to require further preparatory work. For this reason the list of adaptation experts and the gathering of up-to-date information on adaptation was postponed to the fourth AC meeting in Fiji in September. Further, work resulting from the work programme on loss and damage was rescheduled for the fifth AC meeting, which will take place in the beginning of 2014.

The long agenda of this past meeting suggests large icebergs of work that lay ahead of the AC in consolidating its work arrangements, proving impact and ensuring outcomes. One issue is the contribution by different members to the progress of the AC. This can be described as sketchy with some members contributing a lot, and others less. AC members again should be encouraged to thoroughly prepare key issues before each meeting to then be able to take over more responsibility and ownership of various items on the agenda. Regrettably, the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) representative Annemieke Nijhof decided to step down. Special responsibility therefore lies with the Government of the Netherlands and the EU to find a new representative that puts the AC further on the success track through excellent knowledge of adaptation, a sound understanding of the UNFCCC process and decent leadership qualities.

Lisa Junghans and Sven Harmeling, Germanwatch

See also the Germanwatch pre-sessional briefing on the Adaptation Committee meeting:  
[www.germanwatch.org/en/download/7807.pdf](http://www.germanwatch.org/en/download/7807.pdf)