

PAPER NO. 4: SAMOA
ON BEHALF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

**View of Samoa on behalf the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
of Methods and Tools to Evaluate Adaptation**

Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) welcomes this opportunity to provide comments on the report of the adaptation workshop contained in FCCC/SBSTA/2001/Inf.4 and the conclusions therein. AOSIS also wishes to provide further views on the general approaches to adaptation work under the Convention, in light of the decision on guidance to the financial mechanism.

AOSIS is grateful to the Chairman of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) for his concise summary of the workshop proceedings. Many experts, including some from Small Island Developing States, attended the workshop. In future, it would be beneficial if more experts from the most vulnerable countries, in particular from SIDS, would be invited to participate in these workshops. The Secretariat should ensure adequate representation, and should be invited to liaise closely with the Office of the Chairman of AOSIS and the SIDS Unit of United Nations DESA in this regard.

The workshop report builds on the valuable reports compiled by the Secretariat as a result of Decision 9/CP.3 and the subsequent technical papers and workshop reports. It is evident that the work has progressed and the Secretariat has sought greater specificity for establishing the appropriate modalities. The next steps will require that Parties agree to an approach or modality that would allow vulnerable developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and Small Island Developing States, to assess, access and utilize appropriate and relevant adaptation technologies and methods.

These initiatives to address adaptation are particularly significant following the release of the IPCC's Third Assessment Report which underlines the importance of adaptation as a response to addressing the complex challenges of global climate change. As the IPCC TAR notes small island States face peculiar adaptive difficulties, and it is therefore important that any guidelines or models being developed for use in the UNFCCC processes encompass approaches and methodologies that are relevant to the national circumstances of AOSIS member States.

In this regard, AOSIS reiterates the decision of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, which at its 14th session "took note of the proposed workshop on adaptation, to be held under the auspices of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), as well as the request of the Chairman of AOSIS for assistance from donors, the Global Environment Facility and the secretariat, to enable AOSIS to conduct the workshop in the last quarter of 2001 and report on its outcomes to future sessions of the SBI". As presently envisaged the workshop would *inter alia* assess existing methodological and policy deficiencies, study pilot or demonstration project ideas, and develop a set of suggested guidelines for implementing adaptation in practice.

AOSIS acknowledges that the current guidelines for national communications do not sufficiently address vulnerability and adaptation, as has been pointed out in previous submissions from AOSIS. Furthermore, the guidelines for national communications do not

give sufficient advice to countries as to how to assess different adaptation methodologies as well as the adaptability of existing technologies for relevant application.

The linkages to other processes under the FCCC must be kept in perspective. The call for action by the least developed countries, and the development of NAPAs will be an important contribution to the climate change process as a whole. The work on technology transfer is also going to have important impact on the future development of new and innovative adaptation technologies. Furthermore, adaptation is likely to be viewed as one of the key measures under capacity building.

AOSIS would like to stress that the process is not starting from scratch. The Secretariat has outlined in past technical papers examples of available technologies to assess coastal processes, characteristics and vulnerabilities, which are key aspects of any studies on coastal adaptation. A survey of the national communications from non-Annex I Parties shows that only a modest number of these technologies have been made available to the countries as part of their enabling activities. For adaptation to be made a viable undertaking, extensive information must be gathered. Hence, any adaptation program must allow countries to avail themselves of the supporting technology and training to undertake these studies, such as shoreline monitoring, GIS and remote sensing.

It will be important to improve on the dissemination and exchange of information and experiences. AOSIS recognizes that having better access to the expertise, methods and literature from the developed countries is essential for developing countries. There should be greater opportunities for information sharing, and for promoting the two-way feedback process between developers of models and end-users and among end-users, as suggested by the workshop. Impacts and vulnerabilities that are common to neighboring countries render the regional context of particular relevance in this process of information exchange. This has been shown extensively by the regional cooperation among SIDS, and has become a featured request from other SIDS in their project proposals.

Information sharing among countries and within countries, is an essential feature of climate change impact, vulnerability and adaptation assessments. The exchange of information should be interactive and involve innovative sources of new information. In order to have a successful and meaningful adaptation program there is a need for flexibility and innovation. Sources of information could also include country submissions (particularly for national communications) and feedback from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other interested groups should also be involved.

It has been noted that the quality of information needs to be improved. While previous technical papers have been very informative, there should be a reflection on the appropriateness of the methods for particular purposes. There should also be more detailed examples of the applications of the methods.

It is important, however, as recognized in the IPCC TAR, that adaptive actions need to be taken as early as possible if the adverse effects of climate change are to be addressed in a proactive manner by the most vulnerable countries. In this regard AOSIS countries have already begun to identify key hardware and software needs, including capital projects, that meet the need for sustainable development and addressing climate change concerns. It is important that funding be targeted early towards strengthening such initiatives since these are

important elements of overall adaptation to climate change. It therefore becomes critical that guidelines for adaptation do not restrict themselves to complex technical studies and assessments but instead recognize the dynamics of the interlinkages between sustainable development and efforts at climate change adaptation.

As mentioned, AOSIS believes that all organizations with expertise should become involved in the FCCC work on adaptation. AOSIS sees an important role for the secretariat of the UNFCCC in the exchange and dissemination of information on methods to assess vulnerability and adaptation, serving as a permanent information clearing house in this area. The secretariat should provide continuity and maintain institutional memory about the status of methods. There is a need for the FCCC to maintain close links with the organizations of SIDS, SIDSNet and the SIDS Unit.

Finally, before any new suggestions for adaptation frameworks are considered, there is an urgent need to allow the key stakeholders in the process - the most vulnerable developing countries - to have the opportunity to develop their own views. Some regions have already built proposals for adaptation frameworks, and it is important to utilize these informed and authoritative views and suggestions. As far as possible efforts should be made to build on such attempts, ensuring that these proposals are country driven and reflect national and regional priorities.

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