

Consultations for WDR2010 (Africa NAPA Meeting)

When: Friday, November 21, 2008

Where: Johannesburg, South Africa

Participants: The WDR 2010 team sponsored a workshop in Johannesburg that drew together participants in the National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPA) from ten countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia

Summary:

Key Message #1: Adaptation Financing (WDR chapter 6): Nearly all the participants expressed significant concerns about the low availability of funds to address adaptation needs identified in the NAPAs. The NAPA was supposed to identify urgent and immediate adaptation needs. Although a number of criticisms have been advanced against the NAPA process, the fact remains that the NAPAs constitute the only available cross-national planning documents for adaptation. They have been developed by the least developing countries and are an expression of a nationally owned process for thinking about adaptation. They were prepared using a common process in all LDCs, and most countries have completed their NAPAs. The collective costs of all projects identified as being urgent in the 28 available NAPA documents is less than 1 billion dollars. Despite this relatively low price tag, little financial support has been available to address the identified adaptation projects. As one of the participants in the meeting said, if the NAPA projects have not been supported or implemented after 2 years of being identified, are they still NAPAs? Climate change needs and requirements change over time – if funds are not available from the international community to address even the urgent needs identified in the NAPAs by the LDCs, valid concerns can be raised about the seriousness of donors to assist broader and more comprehensive adaptation needs in the developing world.

Key Message #2: Institutional Architecture for Adaptation (WDR chapter 5): In general, participants suggested that the available institutional architecture for adaptation, as developed by the NAPA process, was a significant advance over what had existed. Nonetheless, institutions for more comprehensive adaptation will need to be a) more permanent, b) better linked to different ministries, c) need substantial support from ministries of Finance and Planning (instead of just from ministries of environment and sectoral directorates), and d) will have to be connected better to provincial, district, and lower level planning and implementation mechanisms. Adaptation planning can be carried out through a dedicated body devoted to adaptation and climate change, but it will be critical to pursue implementation of adaptation projects through existing institutional and governmental structures since in many cases these projects have a sectoral nature – natural resources, infrastructure, public health, or information dissemination. What is different perhaps is the nature of linkages and integration across projects, and the kinds of information that will be needed to ensure that the projects are for adaptation to climate change. But support from the finance and sectoral ministries will be crucial for effective implementation of adaptation plans.

Key Message #3: Capacity for Adaptation Planning and Implementation (WDR chapter 4-5): Nearly all participants also emphasized the fact that the existing capacity for adaptation in most developing countries is very low – and this includes technical capacity, knowledge, training in the relevant areas, equipment, and modeling necessary to understand climate impacts, as also the implications of different climate hazards for the country in question. As a result, the participants emphasized the need to create capacity in African universities, to involve different civil society actors, and to create greater awareness regarding climate change and adaptation.