

## **Report of panel discussions during the high-level segment**

### **Panel 2: "Impacts of climate change, adaptation measures and sustainable development"**

Thursday, 16 December 2004

#### **Moderator:**

**H.E. Mr. Enele Sopoaga**

**Permanent Representative to the United Nations (Tuvalu)**

Many of this morning's interventions expressed their pleasure with our accomplishments in the last ten years. Yet as many of our colleagues pointed out, greater challenges lie ahead, the impacts of climate change are increasingly being witnessed all over the globe in developing and developed countries alike.

We have heard today many times that there is an urgent need to move from activities that "facilitate adaptation" to actual implementation of adaptation actions. Unless the whole issue of climate change is addressed, the opportunity for sustainable development for all countries, especially the most vulnerable as well as indigenous communities is in jeopardy.

Our colleagues, in particular from the small island developing states and the least developed countries illustrated how extreme weather events have increased in recent years and have impacted their economies and societies. They reminded us that climate change threatens their very existence. Let us not forget this as we move forward in our negotiations.

It was also underscored that it is important to enhance our efforts to mainstream adaptation to climate change into the broader sustainable development agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as well as to benefit from the synergies with other Rio Conventions. In this regard it was quite pleasing to hear today from many colleagues that the issue of adaptation is firmly embedded in their domestic policy planning.

Many colleagues stressed that there is a need to continue research on climate change and to continuously improve observation data. However, the existing should not prevent us from moving forward on our adaptation agenda.

We noted that the UNFCCC provides a valuable forum for information sharing on methodologies and tools for adaptation. The useful in-session workshops as well as work on methods and tools are good examples to improve our knowledge base to progress national adaptation efforts.

Our colleagues highlighted that the sufficient and timely availability of both financial resources and relevant methodologies and technologies are of critical importance in this regard. Many colleagues pointed out the recent progress on adaptation funding, which includes the GEF strategic window on adaptation, the LDC Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund as well as the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol.

We heard from many LDC colleagues on how they are progressing with their National Adaptation Programmes of Action, including the first submission by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Yet, many colleagues of the developing countries reminded us of their limited

capacity to deal with the growing impacts of climate change, thus more financial and technological support including capacity building is needed.

Finally, in our effort to move adaptation forward, we should not forget that we cannot adapt to all impacts of climate change and that adaptation cannot substitute strong mitigation efforts.

Both adaptation and mitigation efforts are needed by all Parties so that we can together fulfil the objective of our Convention.

Your Excellency  
President of COP10  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies

It is an honour for me to report to COP on the conclusions of the Panel II discussions among ministers and other heads of delegation yesterday.

The discussions in Panel II focussed on the topic: *Impacts of climate change, adaptation measures and sustainable development*. The discussions were led by presentations from five panelists comprising ministers from Australia, Bangladesh, Hungary, Mexico, Senegal, and the United Kingdom.

Although many delegations expressed pleasure with our accomplishments in the last ten years, there were also strong expressions warning of the greater challenges that lie ahead. Many also acknowledged that the impacts of climate change were increasingly being witnessed all over the globe in developing and developed countries alike, and that the threat of these impacts of climate change was real.

Strong views were expressed on the **urgency** to move from activities that "facilitate adaptation" to actual implementation of adaptation actions. Unless the whole issue of climate change is addressed, the opportunity for sustainable development for all countries, especially the most vulnerable as well as indigenous communities was in jeopardy.

Many delegations, in particular from the small island developing states, the least developed countries, and those in the Arctic regions illustrated how extreme weather events have increased in recent years and have impacted on their economies and the lives of their societies. They reminded us that climate change threatens their very existence, and appealed for understanding and leadership on the urgent need to move forward in our negotiations and in our actions, immediate and future, against climate change. Strong views were also expressed on the need to avoid confusing the addressing of adaptation issues to the impacts of climate change and issues of the impact of implementation of actions.

It was also underscored that it is important to enhance our efforts to mainstream adaptation to climate change into the broader sustainable development agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as well as to benefit from the synergies with other Rio Conventions. In this regard it was quite pleasing to hear that the issue of adaptation to the impacts of climate change was firmly embedded in domestic policy planning.

Many colleagues stressed that there was a need to continue research on climate change and to continuously improve observation data. However, it was strongly underscored that existing uncertainty should not prevent us from moving forward on adaptation actions to ensure sustainable development.

We noted that the UNFCCC provided a valuable forum for information sharing on methodologies and tools for adaptation to the impacts of climate change. The useful in-session workshops as well as work on methods and tools are good examples to improve our knowledge base to progress national adaptation efforts.

Delegations also highlighted that the sufficient and timely availability of both financial resources and relevant methodologies and technologies are of critical importance to support adaptation actions. They stressed the need to improve access to adaptation funding, which includes the GEF strategic window on adaptation, the LDC Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund as well as the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol.

Many from the LDCs noted the positive progress made under their National Adaptation Programmes of Action, including the first submission by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Yet, many of the developing countries also reminded us of their limited capacity to deal with the growing impacts of climate change, thus more financial and technological support including capacity building is needed.

Finally, there were strong views expressed that in our effort to move adaptation forward, we should not forget that we cannot adapt to all impacts of climate change and that adaptation cannot substitute strong mitigation efforts.

Both adaptation and mitigation efforts are needed by all Parties so that we can together fulfil the objective of our Convention.