

Thirteenth Meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment 5 February 2007, Nairobi

SUMMARY RECORD

1. Commonwealth Ministers and Senior Officials met on 5 February 2007 as the thirteenth session of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE). The meeting was convened to coincide with the 24th Session of the Governing Council of UNEP/Global Environment Ministers Forum. It was chaired by the Hon. Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, M.P., Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya (a list of participants is provided as Annex I).

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Opening Remarks

2. The meeting was opened by Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Director, Economic Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, who introduced the Chair. The Chair welcomed Ministers and Senior Officials and emphasised that the purpose of this meeting would be to comment on the Commonwealth's programme of work on climate change and to examine issues related to climate change that need to be taken forward at the international level.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda

3. The CCGE adopted the provisional agenda [document CCGE(06)2(Admin)Rev of January 2006].

Agenda Item 3: Addressing the Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Needs of Highly Vulnerable Commonwealth Countries in their Efforts to Adapt to Climate Change

4. The **Chair** invited comments on the background paper for the meeting (CCGE(07)1). He also suggested that Ministers consider issues that might be addressed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in Kampala in November 2007. Paper CCGE(07)1 is a response to mandates from Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings in Abuja (2003) and Malta (2005) on the Commonwealth role in addressing the technical assistance and capacity building needs of highly vulnerable member states in their efforts to adapt to climate change. It incorporates a needs assessment and gap analysis, requested by CCGE-12 in 2006. In preparation for CCGE-13, the draft paper was reviewed by a contact group of delegations and experts (Nairobi, 14 November 2006) chaired by Professor Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Invitees included: Antigua, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Maldives, Singapore, South Africa, Tuvalu, Uganda and the United Kingdom. The paper is divided into three sections. Part I presents an assessment of the impacts of climate change on small states and least developed countries of the Commonwealth and their priority needs for capacity building and technical assistance. Part II reviews the current international framework for assistance on adaptation to climate change and considers where the Commonwealth is best placed to add value and address critical gaps. Part III presents a framework of Commonwealth support on adaptation to climate change in response to the analysis that has gone before.

5. The **Representative of the Maldives** expressed his country's satisfaction that environmental concerns are dominating the global agenda. He said that very small and low-lying countries in the Indian Ocean are highly vulnerable to climate change and face severe constraints in terms of the availability of expertise and qualified personnel. He called for a capacity building programme for the Commonwealth to expand training and build a cadre of skills in small states. The Representative said that member countries need to engage civil society and young people, especially through environmental education and awareness. Political will and good governance were also critical factors. The Representative recommended that Commonwealth Heads of Government make environmental concerns a priority issue in their discussions at the next meeting in Kampala.

6. The **Representative of Uganda** welcomed member state delegations to Uganda for the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and said that she hoped there would be time in the agenda to discuss climate change and environmental concerns. In particular, the issue of funding of climate change activities needs to be reviewed, and the relationship between poverty and climate change. While bush burning, tree cutting and deforestation are significant concerns, the poor rely on the use of wood for fuel and countries with conflict, internal displacement, and refugees face challenges in protecting their forests. These issues need to be studied in greater depth and support and solutions found. The development of schemes under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol was also important. Uganda was ready to support waste management and carbon offsetting for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and would like to involve young people.

7. The **Representative of South Africa** said that the Commonwealth's capacity building programme needs to be more focused. She expressed her concern that governments were not fully engaging young people and that the capacity of young people needs to be built through their direct involvement in discussions, technical workshops, participation in international meetings and by asking them to bring their inputs. Public awareness programmes and the inclusion of environmental issues in tertiary education were also needed. This direct involvement of young people will help to tackle negative issues such as youth involvement in crime.

8. The **Representative of The Gambia** said the majority of Commonwealth countries were developing countries and amongst the poorest and most vulnerable in the World. He asked the Commonwealth to promote capacity building and technical assistance, especially at the grassroots level, and support learning through practical action by, for example, reviewing demonstration projects in the field. The Representative saw a Commonwealth role in co-ordinating activities amongst member states; mobilising resources and promoting South-South co-operation.

9. The **Representative of Ghana** stressed the importance of local authorities in addressing climate change and called for building capacity within this sphere. The Commonwealth should also examine the funding regimes that exist at national, regional and international levels, and the implications of a tax on airlines or air flights. Critically, governments need to maintain and sustain rainforests – an interest that many Commonwealth countries share.

10. The **Representative of Seychelles** said that much more could be done to foster South-South co-operation, particularly in the area of disaster risk reduction and disaster management. The Minister noted that for the first time the Southern islands of the Seychelles had been hit by a cyclone. The Seychelles could benefit from a sharing of Commonwealth experiences with extreme weather events. People also need access to effective and affordable insurance.

11. The **Representative of Grenada** said that Caribbean states share the concerns of the Indian Ocean region. He supported the comments made by South Africa concerning the role of young people and said that their involvement in policy making would help to build continuity and resilience. The Representative supported a number of initiatives in the paper, including those related to curriculum exchange and development. He highlighted the role of the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network in linking tertiary experiences. More support was needed for data analysis and technology and knowledge transfer.

12. The **Representative of Tuvalu** said there was a role for the Commonwealth in addressing peace and security issues linked to environmental concerns and climate change, and it should devise a strategic response in this area. The Representative called for the capacity building programme to be focused – the Commonwealth should add value and support the participation and voice of its member governments. In capacity-building, the emphasis should be on: curriculum development at all levels; and technical support to help countries improve their capacity in a way that is tailored to their needs. With respect to the participation by small states and least developed countries, the Commonwealth should help by supporting these countries to implement multilateral environmental agreements and share their knowledge. Small states require funding to enable them to participate in international discussions. Insurance was also a key concern.

13. The **Representative of Australia** welcomed the paper and emphasised that the Commonwealth must avoid any duplication of effort. In this respect, the Representative noted that there was already a lot of work being done through the UNFCCC and there was no need for the Commonwealth Secretariat to duplicate these efforts given that the UNFCCC has the international mandate to take this work forward. He also stressed that there were sources of funding available under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, LDC Fund, Special Climate Change Fund and Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund. The Commonwealth's comparative advantage lay in two areas: (a) to improve governance arrangements to facilitate better adaptation efforts; and (b) given that transforming Commonwealth societies is the theme for CHOGM, to examine the impacts of climate change on human and economic development.

14. The **Representative of Pakistan** said that climate change concerns should be an agenda item for the Uganda CHOGM. He felt that work at a pan-Commonwealth level was too broad and that activities need rather to be developed on the basis of regional co-operation. Financing of climate change activities was always a problem and the Commonwealth could develop a GEF project on a regional basis. He noted that this meeting was focused especially on the needs of Least Developed Countries and small states, but developing countries also need capacity building and technical assistance to support their efforts on climate change.

15. The **Representative of Cameroon** supported the comments made by Uganda and South Africa with respect to the involvement of young people and announced that a youth

summit was being held in Norway, in July 2007, in which climate change was a sub-theme. He called on the Commonwealth to support young people in participating in this event. The Representative said that the impact of climate change on biodiversity was a major concern and more work was needed in this area. He also felt that discussions at sub-regional levels needed to be strengthened. In its work, the Commonwealth should collaborate with regional initiatives such as those related to the Congo and Chad Basins. Efforts at capacity building need to be continuous and targeted to key groups.

16. The **Representative of the United Kingdom** thanked the Secretariat for its paper and welcomed the practical ideas that it contained. The Representative said that the Commonwealth needs to focus where it can bring added value, emphasising knowledge sharing and the promotion of dialogue on climate concerns. For CHOGM, two issues were of concern: reducing deforestation and raising the profile of member states' concerns ahead of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, in Bali, in December 2007.

17. The **Representative of The Gambia** said that all actions that the Commonwealth takes would be complementary to the work of the UNFCCC, since the Stern Report has indicated the scale of the overall support that is needed to tackle this problem. Outlining the resources available through the GEF Special Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund and the Adaptation Fund (which was not yet operational), he noted that the resources supporting adaptation in particular, fell far short of needs, and that any support by the Commonwealth would complement existing efforts and not duplicate them.

18. The Chair invited **Janet Strachan** of the Commonwealth Secretariat to summarise the debate and respond to comments that had been made. Janet noted that delegates had highlighted a range of priority concerns for capacity building and technical assistance, including:

- deepening the engagement of young people in international meetings, policy discussions and training activities related to climate change.
- stronger climate-related education at all levels – from primary to tertiary levels, and including environmental awareness programmes. Knowledge networking was seen as a Commonwealth strength, and efforts to promote curriculum development and exchange were welcomed.
- the further elaboration of a sustained and more focused capacity building programme targeted at the needs of developing countries.
- capacity building at grassroots level, and through practical learning by examining demonstration projects in the field and a sharing of experiences with concerns such as extreme weather events; and
- developing the capacity of local authorities, stressing that capacity building in this sphere will help to facilitate concrete action on the ground.

Ministers had also provided their views on wider issues of Commonwealth concern, including: funding and technology transfer needs; insurance; the relationship between climate change and biodiversity, and between poverty and climate change (including, the impact of conflict, internal displacement of persons and refugees in managing environmental degradation). Other suggestions were: a strategic examination of peace and security issues related to environmental concerns; an examination of the impacts of climate change on human and economic development; and a focus on reducing deforestation. Janet Strachan expressed her gratification that many of the issues that Ministers had raised were

part of the framework for Commonwealth work on climate change presented in the paper. She agreed that more detailed and focused proposals needed to be developed on capacity building and that this would be done in close collaboration with regional institutions and members to ensure that the Commonwealth adds value and supports priority actions in member states.

19. The **Chair** thanked delegates for an engaged debate. He asked the meeting to approve the programme of work outlined in document CCGE(07)1. This was agreed. He also asked delegates to submit to the Secretariat further thoughts on issues for CHOGM by June 2007. At this point the Kenyan Minister departed and asked the Hon. Jesca Eriyo, Minister of State for Environment for the Republic of Uganda to assist him in chairing the remainder of the meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Date, Venue and Chair of the Next Meeting

20. **Indrajit Coomaraswamy** indicated that the Commonwealth Secretariat will consult with governments on the timing and issues for the next session of the CCGE.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

21. There was no other business.

Close of the Meeting

22. **Indrajit Coomaraswamy** paid a warm tribute to the Kenyan Minister who had guided the work of the CCGE over the past two years, thanking him for his excellent chairing, contributions and support. He also thanked the Hon. Jesca Eriyo, Minister of State for Environment for the Republic of Uganda, for her support in this process. The Minister then brought the meeting to a close and offered to raise the issues highlighted by the CCGE concerning CHOGM with the President of Uganda. She further undertook to work with the Kenyan Minister to prepare and circulate a Summary Statement of the discussions the next day (provided as Annex III).

LIST OF DELEGATIONS

AUSTRALIA

Dr Chris Chung

Director, International Section, Department of the Environment and Water Resources

Dr Stephen Bates

Acting Assistant Director, Department of the Environment and Water Resources

CAMEROON

Mrs Fosi Mbantenkhu Mary

Technical Adviser, Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection

Mr Olinga Ondoa Jean-Paul

Director of Regional Development, Ministry of Planning, Development, Development Programming and Regional Development

CANADA

David McGovern

Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment

The GAMBIA

Bubu Pateh Jallow

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Forestry and Environment Responsible for Climate Change

Momodou B Sarr

Executive Director, Department of National Environment Agency

GHANA

Stephen Asamoah Boeteng

Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment

Jonathon Allotey

Executive Director, Environmental Protection Agency

GRENADA

H. E. Dr Denis G Antoine

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to United States and Organisation of American States

KENYA

Hon Pf Kivutha Kibwana (*Chair*)
Minister for Environment & Natural Resources

Ole Kiyapi
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment

Wellington Goda
Permanent Representative to UNEP

Dr Mwinzi
Executive Director, NEMA

KIRIBATI

Teima Onorio
Vice President and Minister of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development

Tererei Abeti-Peema
Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development

LESOTHO

Mr Jobo Molapo
Head of Delegation, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture

Mr Stanley M Damane
Alternate Director for Environment, Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture

MALAWI

Raphael P Kabwaza
Director of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Energy Mines and Natural Resources

MALDIVES

Hon Ahmed Abdulla
Minister of Environment, Energy and Water

Mr Amjad Abdulla
Director Strategic Policy, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Water

MAURITIUS

Mr Oomaduth Jadoo
Principal Assistant Secretary, Environment and National Development Unit (NDU)
Ministry of Environment & NDU

MOZAMBIQUE

Jose Mael Guamba
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment

Marcos Namashulva
High Commissioner, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Milagre Macaringue
Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

NEW ZEALAND

Nick Kiddle
Deputy Permanent Representative (Geneva), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

NIGERIA

Ms Anne N Ene-Ita
Director, Federal Ministry of Environment and Housing

PAKISTAN

Makhdoom Syed Faisal Saleh Hayat
Federal Minister for Environment

Mr Khizar Hayat
Joint Secretary, (IC) Ministry of Environment

SEYCHELLES

Hon Mr Ronny Jumeau
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources

Mr Rolph Payet
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

ST KITTS & NEVIS

Randolph Edmead
Senior Environmental Officer, Ministry of Sustainable Development

SIERRA LEONE

Mr Chris Squire
Executive Commissioner, National Commissioner of the Environment and Forestry (NaCEF)

Mr Stephen S J Jusu
*Director of Environment, National Commissioner of the Environment and Forestry
(NaCEF)*

SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Mr Alf Wills
Deputy Director-General, International Liaison, Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Ms Gugu Kanyile
Personal Assistant to Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

SWAZILAND

James Vilakati
Director of Environment, Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Communication

TUVALU

Enele Sopoaga
Ambassador and Special Adviser to the Tuvalu Permanent Mission to the UN

UGANDA

Hon Eriyo Jesca
Minister of State for Environment

Mrs Agness Kalibala
Deputy High Commissioner, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Eliphaz Bazira
Commissioner Environment Affairs, Ministry of Environment

UNITED KINGDOM

Ray Kyles
Deputy British High commissioner

Madeleine Garlick
Environmental Governance Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

CARICOM SECRETARIAT

Anya Thomas
Senior Project officer, Sustainable Development

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy
Director, Economic Affairs Division

Ms. Janet Strachan
Chief Advisor on Sustainable Development

Mr Andrew Armitage
Programme Assistant, Economic Affairs Division

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(CCGE)**

5 February 2007, Nairobi

Summary Statement by the Chair

Commonwealth Ministers and Senior Officials met on 5 February 2007 as the thirteenth session of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE). The meeting was convened to coincide with the 24th Session of the Governing Council of UNEP/Global Environment Ministers Forum held in Nairobi. It was chaired by the Hon. Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, M.P., Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya.

Ministers considered and broadly welcomed the approaches outlined in a Commonwealth programme of work on adaptation to climate change. Stressing the importance of avoiding duplication, working with existing initiatives, and drawing on the Commonwealth's comparative advantage in elaborating this work programme, delegates highlighted a number of areas for particular attention.

There was a strong call for the greater involvement of young people in international policy debates around climate change issues – seeking their views, and developing their capacity through direct involvement in decision making forums and in technical workshops. Such an approach can help support a positive role for young people in society, and bring greater continuity and resilience in approaches to climate change.

Ministers sought a focused and sustained capacity building programme by the Commonwealth, aimed at the needs of developing countries. One delegate expressed the need to achieve capacity building at the grassroots level, and through practical learning by examining demonstration projects in the field. Another highlighted the role of local authorities, stressing that capacity building in this sphere would help to facilitate concrete action on the ground.

To engage citizens, environmental education is required at all levels, from primary to tertiary levels, and including environmental awareness programmes. Knowledge networking was seen as a Commonwealth strength, and efforts to promote curriculum development and exchange were welcomed by the CCGE.

With respect to policy issues, delegates saw scope for the Commonwealth to examine: funding regimes on climate change adaptation, including at the regional level; insurance issues; the implications of proposals such as a tax on aircraft fuel or flights; and approaches to maintaining and sustaining rainforest resources which is an important natural resource in many member states.

One delegate highlighted the Commonwealth's role in ensuring the full participation of small island states and least developed countries in multilateral negotiations. Other suggestions included: stepping up South-South co-operation through the Commonwealth, which could promote an exchange of experiences on issues such as disaster risk reduction,

disaster management and insurance; enhancing regional approaches; and using the Commonwealth's experience on governance issues to facilitate a more streamlined approach at the national level to adaptation to climate change.

Ministers called for climate change concerns to be prioritised within discussions at the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala, Uganda in November 2007. Among the views expressed was the hope that CHOGM would provide new political momentum that enabled countries to fight the challenge of climate change. Issues for consideration included: funding and technology transfer needs; the relationship between poverty and climate change (including, the impact of conflict, internal displacement of persons and refugees in managing environmental degradation); and experiences with the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. Other suggestions were: a strategic examination of peace and security issues related to environmental concerns; an examination of the impacts of climate change on human and economic development as part of the CHOGM theme of 'transforming Commonwealth societies'; and a focus on reducing deforestation.

The Hon. Jesca Eriyo, Minister of State for Environment for the Republic of Uganda, agreed to raise the issues highlighted by the CCGE with the President of Uganda and to liaise closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat in taking forward preparations for CHOGM.

Nairobi – 6 February 2007