BACKGROUND NOTE

South Asia Regional Workshop on lessons learnt in Strategy Implementation on Climate Change Adaptation in Water Sector

Co-hosted and convened by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) and Global Water Partnership South Asia (GWP SAS)

Colombo, Sri Lanka
9 - 10 September 2014

Background

Climate change is one of the most important environmental, social and economic issues facing the world today. In the Asia and the pacific region and particularly in the South Asia Sub-region, there is evidence of prominent increases in the intensity and/or frequency of many extreme events. Despite growing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, some impacts such as higher temperatures, more intense floods, droughts, wildfires, and rising sea levels are now inevitable. It must be planned for and adapt to these changes, to minimize the negative impacts and enhance the benefits to natural systems, societies, and human activities and well-being. This challenges decision making at all levels, from individuals to governments, as well as in business and industry.

Co-hosted and convened by the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and Global Water Partnership South Asia (GWP SAS), the workshop on “South Asia Regional Workshop on lesson learnt in Strategy Implementation on Climate Change Adaptation in Water Sector” will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 9 - 10 September 2014. This regional workshop will bring together researchers, policy makers, and practitioners from South Asia Region to share insights into the challenges and opportunities that adaptation presents, and to share strategies for decision making from the international to the local scale with respect of water.

This work-shop will also provide an opportunity for the water sector to become aware of the National Adaptation Plans and start preparing to engage with the process in their countries. This means inter-alia identifying some of the sectoral and cross sectoral issues that are relevant for the sector to consider in light of the medium term orientation of the NAP process. Some of these
issues relate to better institutional coordination, building capacity for risk analysis and appraisal of adaptation options and better monitoring.

The 13th meeting of Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment programme (SACEP) held on 3 – 5 December 2013 at Islamabad, Pakistan by its decision 10.2.14, approved the inclusion of “Partnership with Global Water Partnership (GWP) on Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change” into the work programme of SACEP and directed SACEP Secretariat to carry out capacity building programmes on the issues of Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change. Further, the 9th meeting of Governing Council (GC) of SACEP held in August 2005 at Thimphu, Bhutan identified the “adaptation to climate change” as one of the key areas concerned in the region and since then, it has been in the SACEP’s work programme as a priority area. The Sixteenth Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Thimphu, Bhutan, on 28-29 April 2010, recognizing that effective responses, both on mitigation and adaptation should be formulated and implemented at regional and international levels, declared the Thimphu Statement on Climate Change which agreed to implement number of recommendation collectively. The 11th meeting of Governing Council of SACEP approved the project proposal for the establishment of an Environmental data and Information Management System for South Asia which will provide a platform to share the data of all sectors of environment including water.

Scope and focus

This workshop will focus on lesson learnt in strategy implementation and adaptation options with respect to water. It will bring together decision makers, scientists and practitioners from South Asia Region to share their experience in strategy implementation and guest speakers will present the adaptation option.

In accordance with “Thimphu Statement of Climate Change”, the workshop will:

- Showcase the strength & weakness of strategy implementation in SA Countries,
- Highlight the institutional mechanism in strategy implementation,
- How robust adaptation decision making can proceed in the face of uncertainty about climate change and its impacts.
- Explore practical adaptation policies and approaches, and share strategies for decision making from the international to the local scale.
- Introduce and examine new tools and methodologies for adaptation.

This workshop will help cross learning on strategy implementation in country level and regional cooperation on climate change with respect of water. This work-shop will also start making connections between lessons learnt with broader processes such as the National Adaptation
Plans process. This work-shop has potential to identify new opportunities for engagement on NAPs for Least Developed and Developing Countries.

**Objective**

The objectives are;

a. Share experiences and assist governments in developing strategies for adaptation to climate change in the water sector,

b. Assess the information needs in the region to define such adaptation strategies, and

c. Especially to address the benefits of and mechanisms for trans-boundary cooperation in climate adaptation activities.

d. Generate understanding of the NAPs process and how this could be potentially connected to developing strategies for adaptation to climate change in the water sector.

**Expected Outcome**

At the end of the programme, participants are expected to arrive at a shared understanding of best practices, innovative tools and methodologies, needs at trans-boundary level, relevance NAPs process, lessons learned, and gaps leading to strengthened collaboration and interaction among the participants that will contribute to development and implementation of regional activities on climate change adaptation in the future.

---

1 The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process was established in 2010 as part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework to complement the existing short-term orientated, "urgent and immediate" focused, National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). The NAP process is to support all developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs), in meeting their medium- and long-term adaptation needs. The NAP process is meant to play a critical role in reducing vulnerability and, building adaptive capacity by mainstreaming adaptation into all sector-specific and national development planning. The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) has published the NAP Technical Guidelines to help countries put in place a system for their NAP process to take effect.