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UN System Support to Adaptation – Progress and Opportunities for Enhanced Action

UN system-wide response to climate change

Under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) brings together 29 UN system organizations to jointly support Member States in meeting global challenges.

In 2007, the CEB adopted the Climate Change Actions Framework, a joint action-oriented approach in line with the decisions of the UNFCCC Parties. The UN system supports Member States in implementing their commitments and in responding to the emerging challenges.

At COP 17 / CMP 7, the UN system is presenting its ongoing work and practical solutions and tools at side events, exhibits and by sharing a joint package with thematic information.

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The earth's climate is changing at rates unprecedented in recent human history and will continue to change. The associated impacts and risks are global in their nature, geographically diverse and are increasingly being felt across a range of systems and sectors essential for human livelihood and well-being. Communities that are particularly vulnerable are often least able to adapt.

At the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Parties agreed that enhanced action and international cooperation on adaptation is urgently required to enable and support the implementation of adaptation actions, including in the areas of water resources, health, agriculture and food security, infrastructure, socioeconomic activities, ecosystems and coastal zones, and established the Cancun Adaptation Framework to guide the implementation of, and support for, adaptation under the Convention. Parties invited relevant multilateral and international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to undertake and support enhanced action on adaptation at all levels in a coherent and integrated manner, building on synergies among activities and processes, and to make information available on the progress made.

The United Nations system collectively offers a range of tools, services and expertise to assist vulnerable countries and communities to enable effective adaptation in their efforts to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development, through knowledge sharing, strengthening of technical and institutional capacities, and the provision of financial and technological support.

United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination Climate Change Action Framework

Focus (left) and Cross-Cutting Areas (right) have been identified in pursuance of the broader mandates and capacities in the UN system (with corresponding convening agencies) to ensure better coordination and cooperation for concrete deliverables:

- Adaptation
- Technology transfer
- Forestry and Agriculture
- Financing mitigation and adaptation action
- Capacity-building

- Climate knowledge; science, assessment, monitoring and early warning
- Supporting global, regional and national action
- Public awareness-raising
- Social Dimensions of Climate Change

UN System Support to Adaptation

Objective

To enable effective adaptation, by delivering actions aimed at reducing vulnerability, managing risk, strengthening adaptive capacity and enhancing climate-resilient development.

Activities

Guided by the principle of focusing on the UN system's joint capabilities, the UN system is taking action through a wide range of initiatives:

- **Promoting better understanding of the climate system and filling information gaps** WMO is developing a comprehensive implementation plan for the Global Framework for Climate Services to enable effective use of climate information. UNDP is partnering with key African Regional Centers to provide technical support and networks essential to address climate science.
- **Assisting developing countries in planning and implementing adaptation and resilience to climate change and natural hazards** UNISDR, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF and WHO are working with more than 800 cities and local governments to help them adapt through various support initiatives and campaigns. WHO, in collaboration with UNEP,

developed a Framework for Public Health Adaptation in Africa to strengthen public health protection from climate risks. WMO, in collaboration with FAO, is organizing International Conferences on Adaptation and Food Security, which resulted in the development of Regional Adaptation Frameworks. UNDP, in partnership with UNIDO and WFP, is implementing the Africa Adaptation Programme to support governments to shift adaptation planning from single-sector project to multi-sector strategic approaches.

- **Linking humanitarian relief with risk reduction, adaptation and resilience building activities** UNISDR, WFP, UNDP, FAO, WMO, UNCCD, UNICEF and others are helping reduce vulnerability, particularly to drought risk, through implementing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. WFP supports the strengthening of countries' emergency preparedness by providing a global early-warning

monitoring service and mainstreaming contingency planning.

- **Facilitating developing countries' ability to access finance and technologies** Following a request from the Adaptation Fund Board, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank jointly initiated a pilot programme for countries wishing to pursue direct access. Evolving into the UNDP Direct Access Support Programme, the programme assesses and develops the capacity of national institutions for climate-related decision making and management of climate financing resources.
- **Scaling-up and sharing knowledge** UNISDR and UNDP helped 40 countries establish and maintain open-access databases of existing climate impacts. UNICEF and its NGO partners have established a partnership, 'Children in a Changing Climate', to share knowledge on the benefits of a child centred approach to adaptation and disaster risk reduction. UNU developed tools for evaluating vulnerability and national adaptation strategies linking climate science and economics.

Moving forward

As Parties to the UNFCCC implement the Cancun Adaptation Framework, the UN system stands ready to provide country-driven support to Member States, through strengthening capacity, scaling up financial and technological support, and enhancing learning.

