

## Many Strong Voices

Arctic • Small Island Developing States • Action on Climate Change



### **Briefing Note #4: Many Strong Voices and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

In 1992, most countries joined an international treaty on climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), concerning means of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The objective of the UNFCCC is to “*achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner*”.

In relation to adaptation, Country Parties to the UNFCCC are encouraged to: (a) cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change; (b) develop and elaborate appropriate and integrated plans for coastal zone management, water resources and agriculture, and for the protection and rehabilitation of areas, particularly in Africa, affected by drought and desertification, as well as floods; (c) take climate change considerations into account in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, and employ appropriate methods (e.g. impact assessments) with a view to minimizing adverse effects on the economy, on public health and on the quality of the environment; and (d) assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting costs of adaptation to those adverse effects.

In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol, a multilateral agreement which includes more powerful and legally-binding measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, was adopted as an addition to the UNFCCC. Article 10 of the Kyoto Protocol commits parties to promote and facilitate adaptation and deploy adaptation technologies to address climate change.

All eight Arctic nations are Parties to the UNFCCC, while seven have ratified the Kyoto Protocol. Among Small Island Developing States (SIDS) group, 43 low-lying and small island countries are Parties to the UNFCCC and 34 have ratified the Kyoto Protocol out of over 130 countries

#### **Links between the Many Strong Voices Programme and UNFCCC**

Many of the current efforts to develop new mitigation and adaptation strategies in the Arctic and SIDS are regional and have not reached a wide audience in most areas, although work in the Caribbean and South Pacific is progressing. An important opportunity exists under the broader umbrella of Article 6 of the UNFCCC to include efforts education, training and public awareness.

Building alliances between the Arctic and SIDS regions, developing common approaches to problem solving, and ensuring that information reaches both decision-makers from developed countries and the peoples most directly affected by climate change will aid in the broader goals outlined in Article 6. The Many Strong Voices Programme seeks to support the overall effort to implement Article 6 of the UNFCCC by linking vulnerable regions in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States to stimulate a dialogue that will:

- Support regional initiatives in education, training, and public awareness raising
- Develop partnerships that will allow people in these regions to exchange information about efforts underway to raise awareness about, and to develop adaptation strategies for, climate change
- Support efforts of local inhabitants so they will be able to influence the debate on, and participate in, decisions on adaptation, and
- Facilitate regional efforts to influence global efforts on adaptation and mitigation.

In addition to supporting Article 6, the MSV programme will support the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) agreement on adaptation (the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change).

For further information, please see:

SBSTA WP on Adaptation:

[http://unfccc.int/adaptation/sbsta\\_agenda\\_item\\_adaptation/items/2673.php](http://unfccc.int/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/items/2673.php)

Party Groupings:

[http://unfccc.int/parties\\_and\\_observers/parties/negotiating\\_groups/items/2714.php](http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/parties/negotiating_groups/items/2714.php)