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TO: DAVID
FROM: P.J.
DATE: 7/13/93
RE: IWG/GEA - Sub-Group on Global Climate Meeting:
Adaptation Issues

Attached is the memo prepared for today's meeting [by "Granville"], which is a good summary of the major points we discussed. Dan Reifsnyder chaired the meeting effectively, and urged participants to consider the adaptation assistance issue carefully; he believes it has been avoided for too long and may soon become heated. The group decided to meet again on this issue in the near future.

The IWG discussion of the adaptation issue is timely in light of the upcoming INC 8 meeting in Geneva (August 16-27, 1993). The author of the attached paper expects "passionate" discussion to occur at that meeting concerning OECD-member obligations to assist developing countries in "adaptation" to climate change (under Article 4-4 of the Framework Convention on Climate Change). If the IWG/GEA acts in the coming weeks to establish how the U.S. will respond if adaptation is discussed, it may avoid being thrust into a "defensive" position at the INC, and may mitigate concerns of developing nations-- particularly those of the small island states-- that the U.S. is avoiding its obligations or is indifferent to their concerns. Good U.S. preparation will also lessen the likelihood that this issue devolves into highly unproductive and politicized debate.

Much of today's discussion centered around the distinction between U.S. efforts on climate change "mitigation" versus "adaptation." The U.S. is already involved in several "mitigation" projects which, if presented in the right manner, might be effectively portrayed as being "adaptation" projects as well; many such projects fall in the areas of sustainable agriculture and coastal zone management, while others concern "disaster prevention/ natural hazards reduction." The U.S. could cite ongoing or planned projects in these areas, and stress that these efforts will assist developing countries in long-term planning and in "adaptation" since they will increasingly factor-in the potential effects of climate change.

Everyone at the meeting agreed that it will be important to obtain an inventory of U.S. climate change-related projects (using a recent AID report as a starting point), but recognized that it would be impossible to prepare a detailed inventory of mitigation-adaptation projects before the INC. The group decided that it would do its best to obtain as much detail as possible on ongoing U.S. efforts to be as prepared as possible for the INC.

Other pre-meeting options for the U.S. are outlined in the attached memo.

P.S.-- Someone mentioned a document-- an "Analytical Framework for the Restructuring of the GEF" (different sections on Climate Change, Waters, Biodiversity). Have you seen it or do you have copies?? If not, I'll try to get them asap. It's supposed to be great.

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN RELATION TO A U.S. INITIATIVE

Background

- Article 4.4 of the FCCC requires developed country parties to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting costs of adaptation.
- "Adverse effects of climate change" is defined in the Convention as changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare.
- "Climate Change" is defined in the Convention as a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.
- The issue of adaptation, while surfacing only peripherally in INC 7, may be addressed more directly in INC 8 (August 16-27, 1993, Geneva).
- The current position of OECD countries is that funds to meet the costs of adaptation should not be provided through the GEF because most adaptation measures produce local rather than global benefits.
 - Activities with local benefits should be planned, funded and implemented in conjunction with national development planning efforts funded bilaterally and through the multilateral development banks.
- OECD countries have not yet worked out specifically how they will meet the obligation to assist with adaptation measures, if not through the GEF.
- No clear definition exists among developed and developing countries of the specific types of measures contemplated under the rubric of "adaptation."
- The issue of adaptation to the impacts of climate change is arising in a number of fora other than the INC, including the GEF negotiations, the U.N. Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (April 1994 in Barbados) and the World Coast Conference (November 1993 in the Netherlands).

- The Interagency Working Group on Global Environmental Affairs agreed in PRD-12 that:

"1) The State Department should lead an interagency review of all U.S. assistance activities and programs that currently assist developing countries in meeting the costs of adaptation to climate change, including the extent to which U.S. contributions to international organizations are now used for this purpose, drawing as appropriate on the PRD NSC-12 (Environmental Assistance) review."

- by September 1993, a report of existing activities (similar to the document "Technology Cooperation related to Global Climate Change" produced by Oak Ridge National Laboratories for DOE in December 1991) should be produced for public distribution.

2) \$100,000 should be reprogrammed to support this effort; funds would be used to enlist the technical support of qualified contractors, (e.g. a U.S. national lab).

3) Based on this review, the United States should consider whether additional funds for adaptation assistance projects should be sought, and whether existing national and multilateral programs should be expanded to meet the U.S. "adaptation" obligation under the Climate Convention.

4) The United States should encourage its OECD partners to define what they are currently doing to meet their "adaptation" obligation under the Convention and consider how existing funds might be mobilized or existing programs expanded; the United States should oppose establishing a new multilateral fund for this purpose."

Issues

How should the United States fulfill the recommendations of the PRD-12 on adaptation to climate change before the convening of INC 8 (August 16-27, 1993, Geneva)?

OPTIONS:

- No initiative
- A limited initiative, focusing on the development of a definition of adaptation as it pertains to climate change and a preliminary inventory of U.S. activities.
- An expanded initiative, including the development of a definition of adaptation as it pertains to climate change, an inventory of U.S. activities, and a framework for further activities.

How should adaptation to the impacts of climate change be defined?

OPTIONS:

- limited: The incremental adaptation necessary to respond to the impacts of climate change over and above natural adaptation or forced adaptation to environmental changes not related to climate change.
- expanded: adaptation to long-term environmental change that includes the impacts of climate change in conjunction with non-climate related changes.

What types of activities might be included?

OPTIONS:

- limited: Only those activities that are undertaken to directly respond to environmental changes specifically attributed to climate change (e.g., the development of a drought-resistant crop to respond to a predicted warmer and drier climate).
- expanded: Activities undertaken to respond to long-term environmental changes, including as a factor the impacts of climate change but also including other environmental changes (e.g., integrated coastal zone management, sustainable agriculture).
- combined: activities in both of the above categories, with distinctions made among the two.

Background Paper

Adaptation to Global Climate Change

The developed country parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change are obliged to provide developing country parties "such financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, needed...to meet the agreed full incremental costs of implementing measures" to mitigate climate change and to "facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change." (Article 4, paragraphs 3 and 1(b), respectively.) In addition and separate from the above obligation, "The developed country Parties...shall also assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of adaptation to those adverse effects." (Article 4, paragraph 4.)

The interpretation of these obligations was a contentious issue during the recent 7th INC session in March and will certainly be passionately discussed at the upcoming 8th session in August. Resolution of the volatile component issues will be critical to future global cooperation on climate change. Specifically, whether adaptation measures produce global environmental benefits (making them eligible for GEF funding) and what types of measures are considered "adaptation" measures are two of the areas negotiators need to be prepared to address.

Definition of Adaptation

Destruction of coastal wetlands, increased frequency of severe storms, and changes in fresh water supply represent some of the projected local and regional impacts of global warming on human and natural systems. Each system will have a different ability to adapt to these impacts.

According to the 1991 NAS report on greenhouse warming, some systems, such as the industrial and energy sectors and human health, are thought to be rather adaptable to projected climate change. Managed forests and grasslands, water resources, human migration, and coastal structures are not as flexible, and adaptation of these systems will incur some cost. Unmanaged natural landscapes and marine ecosystems may be the most vulnerable to rapid climate change as their natural adaptation rates may be less than the projected climate change rate. Adaptation measures for these systems may be quite costly.*

*Comm. on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, Policy Implications of Greenhouse Warming (National Academy Press: 1991) p. 36-41.

The goal of adaptation measures should be to make these systems, especially the most vulnerable, more robust to climate change. The range of measures may be grouped into five categories:

- (1) modify the hazard (e.g., channeling rivers that are prone to flooding)
- (2) prevent or limit impacts (e.g., constructing dikes)
- (3) move or avoid the loss (e.g., implement flood plain zoning)
- (4) share the loss (e.g., providing insurance)
- (5) bear the loss (e.g., losing all or part of the crop).

Within these groups are large subsets of potential adaptation options. These options include:

- promote agricultural research including development of adapted varieties, sustainable use of natural resources, improvement of irrigation efficiency, and exploitation of increased CO₂ concentrations
- improve water system efficiency and robustness through management of resources, changes in living styles, and review of water rights and markets
- re-evaluate margins of safety for long-lived structures including revised projections for severe weather patterns
- slow biodiversity losses by eliminating destructive policies and promoting wildlife and plant reserves and migration corridors
- improve weather forecasts, especially for extreme seasons and patterns.

The choice of the appropriate measures for each region and system obviously depends on the sensitivity of the system and the predicted level of climate change.

Recent Adaptation Programs

The U.S. has already included some adaptation measures in its developing country assistance programs. Examples of recent programs include:

- collaborative research on climate change impacts on agriculture in Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and China
- assessment of sea level rise impacts and planning of appropriate responses for the Yap Island in the Federated States of Micronesia
- collaborative research on impacts on forests in Costa Rica and Venezuela
- development and application of sustainable agricultural techniques and rehabilitation methods for degraded areas in Guinea
- collaborative research on impacts of sea level rise in Brazil, Senegal, Nigeria, Egypt, and China.

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OES/EGC

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