

Seventh Conference on Climate Change  
and Development in Africa

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## Concept note

**Climate change and development in Africa: policies and actions for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement for resilient economies in Africa**

In the assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it has been consistently demonstrated that warming throughout Africa, consistent with anthropogenic climate change, has increased considerably over time. Future impacts are also likely to be overwhelming and substantial, causing wide fluctuations in thermal and precipitation dynamics. In response to the current and future impacts of climate change, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change agreed to submit intended nationally determined contributions as the new global climate governance framework to limit the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. With the signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change, those contributions became nationally determined contributions, on which the global climate actions will be built after 2020. As of June 2018, of the 54 African countries that are signatories to the Paris Agreement, 44 have submitted their nationally determined contributions to the Framework Convention. Having embraced the green growth pathway outlined in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Paris Agreement, the imperative for African countries is to re-examine their options for the implementation of nationally determined contributions under the changing global political landscape to effectively promote climate resilience and low carbon emission development. Translating nationally determined contributions into concrete actions, however, requires, among other things, implementation plans that prioritize specific sectoral climate actions and predictable finance flows, sustained capacity-building and the transfer of relevant technologies from developed countries. This, in turn, calls for serious dialogue and interaction between policymakers, scientists and researchers, as well as other stakeholders, to support the translation of the nationally determined contributions into action plans and programmes. The seventh Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa will therefore bring together various stakeholders to interrogate Africa's nationally determined contributions and define actionable climate agendas. This gathering will build on the sixth Conference, which focused on understanding the implementation implications, challenges and opportunities of the Paris Agreement in the context of Africa's development priorities prior to it coming into effect on 4 November 2016. In keeping with the Conference's founding philosophy, the seventh meeting is intended to facilitate science-practice-policy dialogue. Three themes will guide this dialogue: advancing the implementation of the nationally determined contributions in Africa, the role of climate information and services in support of those contributions and climate finance for them. By uniting different platforms, parallel sessions and exhibitions for dialogue and interaction, the seventh Conference will facilitate and enrich the sharing of lessons from the implementation of nationally determined contributions, key research findings and outreach and policy uptake, as well as stimulate investment.

## **1. Background**

### **1.1. Paris Agreement**

The Paris Agreement came into being after protracted negotiations over many years, marked in particular by the failure of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which had met in Copenhagen in 2009, to usher in a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. The Paris Agreement, as stated in its article 2, is aimed at holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Its implementation would be based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and relevant capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances. In terms of the Paris Agreement, the submitted intended nationally determined contributions become the commitments of the parties to take collective action to implement economy-wide or sector-wide reductions of greenhouse gases emissions that will be evaluated, beginning in 2018. A key component of this accord is that developed countries will make finance and technology available to support developing nations in implementing their nationally determined contributions and adapting to a changing climate.

Although the Paris Agreement has been hailed as a landmark achievement in multilateralism, it was deliberately crafted with weak, self-determined targets and no enforcement mechanisms in order to avoid the challenges experienced with the Kyoto Protocol. This has significant implications for the achievement of the Paris Agreement's goals. Overall, the commitments made under it are not sufficient to meet the 2°C target, with the most optimistic of projections indicating that full implementation of the targets will, at best, put the world on course for a 2.7°C warming. For Africa, it is important to note that a global average warming of 2°C would imply temperature increases of greater than 4°C on most of the continent, with disastrous consequences for economies, infrastructure and livelihoods. The challenge for the continent is how the various rules and regulations crafted to guide the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including the application of the ratchet-up mechanism, will be applied to support increased ambition beyond the current nationally determined contributions levels to prevent irreversible warming.

### **1.2. Nationally determined contributions of Africa**

As with other parties to the Paris Agreement, African States have, through their nationally determined contributions, undertaken to reduce their emissions through various actions focusing on eliminating fossil fuel-based and land use-based emissions. There are, however, significant differences in the structure and content of the contributions, although the focus is on the calculation of domestic anthropogenic sources of greenhouse gas emissions, clarification of the mitigation pathways to be adopted and a description of the fairness and reasonableness of their contribution to global climate actions. The contributions also project the cost of the implementation of the adaptation and mitigation actions and the expectations of the source of the financing of such actions between domestic (unconditional) and non-domestic (conditional) finance. By and large, Africa's contributions will require significant inflows of conditional finance to be implemented.

Many African countries have made considerable progress in preparing for the implementation of nationally determined contributions, including carrying out consultations with various stakeholders, developing implementation plans, designing institutional

arrangements and coordination mechanisms and designing monitoring, reporting and verification systems to measure progress made in achieving the goals of the contributions.

Converting nationally determined contributions into investment plans and other climate actions requires the appropriate enabling environment, including aligning contributions with the existing national plans and enhanced capacity-building interventions. According to the 2016 African Capacity Index of the African Capacity-Building Foundation, more than 97 per cent of 44 African countries surveyed had a very good policy environment and processes for the implementation of capacity-building initiatives. On the other hand, very few countries (less than 16 per cent) had committed and implemented resources to achieve planned outcomes, while very few African institutions were producing enough skilled human resources to meet market demand for skills in climate planning, science and engineering.

### **1.3. Partnerships with regard to nationally determined contributions**

Nationally determined contributions are central to addressing both mitigation and adaptation actions and are, to varying extents, dependent on the financing modalities for implementation. Crucially for Africa, mitigation actions will pivot around avoiding emissions, given the low level of fossil fuel-intensive activities on the continent. This presents Africa with very real opportunities to leapfrog the carbon technologies that have driven the industrialization of developed countries and to embark on industrialization technologies that are green and climate-resilient. African contributions are the central component of development policies that are intended to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to promote long-term climate actions and mobilize the means of implementation, various institutions have established partnerships regarding contributions with national, subnational, non-State and private sector actors on policies, strategies and actions tailored to the individual needs of African countries. Such partnerships include the Africa Nationally Determined Contributions Hub, the African Partnership Facility for Nationally Determined Contributions, the Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership and the new nationally determined contributions facility of the Agence française de développement.

The Africa Nationally Determined Contributions Hub, led by the African Development Bank, supports African countries in the development of strategies and implementation mechanisms for their contributions. It also provides technical assistance on strategy development regarding the contributions, facilitating access to climate finance, scientific knowledge, capacity-building, peer-to-peer learning, best practice sharing, monitoring and evaluation, and project origination.

The African Partnership Facility for Nationally Determined Contributions, led by ClimDev-Africa, is aimed at building on the same global solidarity framework upon which the intended nationally determined contributions were established in order to provide the physical and virtual space to facilitate the sharing of information, knowledge and skills to develop the ability to undertake and learn from the implementation of nationally determined contributions in a way that maintains alignment with national development aspirations and shapes future economic growth under climate change.

The Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership, hosted by the World Resources Institute and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, is also aimed at supporting countries in defining processes, policies and plans to advance the implementation of nationally determined contributions, while facilitating access to targeted technical assistance and fostering greater collaboration across sectors. It is also intended to raise

awareness of and enhance access to climate support initiatives, best practices, analytical tools and resources, and is used to work with governments to better understand and address constraints so that those governments may gain access to bilateral and international support programmes. The Partnership is also intended to align development finance initiatives more strongly and coherently with the implementation of the contributions.

The new nationally determined contributions facility of the Agence française de développement is aimed at, among other things, strengthening countries' "climate" governance, translating their contributions into sectoral public policies and designing transformational "climate" programmes/projects, with a priority focus on adaptation.

## **2. Objectives**

The general objective of the seventh Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa is to interrogate Africa's nationally determined contributions and define actionable agendas regarding them. The specific objectives are the following:

- To provide space and facilitate science-practice-policy dialogue to unpack the options available for the implementation of the contributions in Africa
- To address the missing links for enhanced uptake and use of Climate Information and Services into development planning, policy and practice in Africa, including sectoral contributions
- To understand the various options to finance climate action, including the modalities for unlocking available and new forms of climate finance, such as leveraging market mechanisms for climate actions and sustainable economic development.

## **3. Subthemes**

### **3.1. Advancing the implementation of nationally determined contributions in Africa**

The modest goals of the Paris Agreement present a real challenge for limiting global warming this century to 2°C and striving to bring it down to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The most optimistic projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicate that the full implementation of the nationally determined contributions will, at best, put the world on course for a 2.7°C warming. Moreover, a global average warming of 2°C in the Paris Agreement would imply temperature increases of greater than 4°C in most African countries, with disastrous consequences for economies, infrastructure and livelihoods. As the Paris Agreement makes the transition into implementation, the challenge for the continent is how the various rules and regulations that are being crafted to guide its implementation, including the application of the ratchet-up mechanism, can be designed in ways that ensure the voluntary commitments of the countries, especially developed ones.

A total of 44 African countries have already ratified the Paris Agreement, with very ambitious conditional and unconditional nationally determined contributions, but these require significant investment, in the order of \$2.5 trillion. It is therefore crucial that efforts be made towards mobilizing significant and adequate support in the implementation process (i.e.,

finance, capacities and technology). Without substantial support, however, African countries will probably not achieve the goals and targets outlined in their contributions. Furthermore, it is important to ensure proper alignment of their implementation with other national development agendas using an integrative approach and joint programming for cost-effective implementation.

This subtheme will cover the following:

- Explore the various policy options that Africa can adopt in order to support and ensure the implementation of the Paris Agreement in realistic, equitable and effective ways, consistent with Africa's sustainable development objectives
- Provide the opportunity for countries to share their experiences and challenges with nationally determined contributions preparedness in the context of the Talanoa dialogue
- Identify various possibilities contained in the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063, the Addis Ababa Actions of the Third International Conference on Financing for Sustainable Development and other development frameworks to ensure that climate change is mainstreamed into all development processes
- Discuss the need to raise the levels of ambition by all stakeholders, such as national and local governments and municipal authorities, civil society and the private sector.

### **3.2. Climate information and services in support of the nationally determined contributions**

Climate information and services provide science-based and user-specific information relating to past, present and potential future climate for decision-making support in sectors affected by climate on global, regional and local scales. They also connect natural science and socioeconomic research with practice and help society to cope with climate variability and change through the transformation of climate-related data, together with other relevant information, into customized products such as projections, trends, economic analysis and services to user communities in various sectors. Such services involve high-quality data and derivatives (e.g., prediction, products and advisories) from national and international databases on temperature, rainfall, wind, soil moisture and ocean conditions, as well as maps, risk and vulnerability analyses, assessments and long-term projections and scenarios.

Factoring climate information and services into policy, planning and practices is crucial for Africa to achieve its development aspirations for enhanced trade competitiveness, reduced poverty and sustainable economic growth. Accelerating the uptake of climate information and services therefore requires an enabling environment for substantive investment in their production and uptake, supported by a compelling case for the socioeconomic benefits of such investment. The key barrier to managing current and future climate risks is the limited availability of accessible, reliable and relevant weather and climate information by end users. The mismatch between the information available and what is needed to support on-the-ground decision-making is another barrier that reduces resilience to climate risk and thereby weakens adaptation efforts. The nationally determined contributions of most African, and Latin

American and the Caribbean countries make reference to the need for climate information and services for effective implementation of their climate actions and mainstreaming climate change into development planning. This indicates the degree to which developing countries are concerned with the use of climate information and services and underscores the urgent need for scientific information on climate variability, trends and extremes in these countries.

Innovative ways of delivering Climate Information Services initiatives that provide science-informed solutions are therefore vital for the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa. Investment in the deployment of robust climate information and services delivery systems for the effective implementation of nationally determined contributions and associated mechanisms established through the global climate governance processes will be crucial. The focus of Climate Information and Services Day is to create a platform for promoting the importance of climate information services in Africa's development agenda, human well-being and economic prosperity, with the ultimate goal of increasing the uptake and use of Climate Information Services. The day will also consist of the Solutions Forum, a marketplace of ideas and opportunity for civil society, experts, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders to contribute their solutions to the long-standing challenges of climate change for Africa. The Climate and Information Services Day subtheme will do the following:

- Identify the role of climate information services in the implementation of nationally determined contributions, especially its contribution to appropriate adaptation planning in a changing climate
- Explore ways of enhancing the uptake and use of Climate Information Services in development planning, policy and practice, including nationally determined contributions in Africa
- Identify an integrated approach for co-designing, co-producing and co-communicating climate services in support of the implementation of nationally determined contributions
- Discuss the potential opportunities for and challenges of private sector participation in the production and delivery of public goods, including climate information and services
- Showcase and share best practices for the development of climate services on the continent.

### **3.3. Climate finance for the implementation of nationally determined contributions**

In 2009, at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, developed countries, for the first time, proposed quantifying financing goals and promised to provide \$30 billion of fast-start finance during the period 2010-2012. They later pledged to contribute finance amounting to \$100 billion annually by 2020. There is, however, no agreement on how developed countries will share the financing responsibility in the future and no clear roadmap towards the realization of that annual amount by 2020. The withdrawal of the United States of America from the Paris Agreement will also have significant implications for already inadequate, unpredictable and difficult-to-access climate finance.

The implementation of the nationally determined contributions in Africa presents unique challenges that need to be addressed urgently. In general, African countries lack adequate climate information and services to inform the policy process. Financing for action on nationally determined contributions from both conditional and unconditional sources is limited. Climate change remains marginal in national policy and development discourse, overtaken by other pressing developmental priorities such as poverty eradication, thus ensuring a continuing need to mainstream climate change into all sectors of the economy.

This subtheme on climate finance for the implementation of nationally determined contributions will do the following:

- Explore Africa's options in mobilizing domestic and other sources of finance for climate action and sustainable economic development
- Explore policies, frameworks and mechanisms needed to secure climate finance to implement African nationally determined contributions
- Interrogate opportunities in the private sector to secure climate finance investment to facilitate the implementation of nationally determined contributions.

#### **4. Format**

The seventh Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa will employ three approaches over three days (11-13 October 2018) in reaching out to and convening the wide range of constituencies and actors engaged in climate change and development in Africa. By uniting different platforms, parallel sessions and exhibitions for dialogue and interaction, the Conference will facilitate and enrich the sharing of lessons, key research findings and outreach and policy uptake, as well as stimulate investment. In addition, there will be pre-events and side events for specific stakeholders. As has been the tradition of previous conferences, these events will be self-organized forums for various partners and stakeholders to discuss topics that are in line with the theme of the Conference.

#### **Categories of participants:**

The seventh Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa will gather a wide range of stakeholders and constituencies, including the following:

- Policymakers and technocrats, including African parliamentarians and representatives of the ministries of finance and economic planning of various African countries, the African Group of Negotiators on climate change and Gabon (which has expressed much interest in the Africa Adaptation Initiative)
- Research institutions and scientists: Climate Research for Development in Africa and academia, including universities, regional climate centres and research centres
- Civil society organizations
- Development partners international organizations
- Private sector.

## 5. Organizers

The Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa is a flagship event of the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) programme.

## 6. Partners

The seventh Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa is being organized in partnership with the following:

