

Sixth Conference on Climate Change
and Development in Africa

Addis Ababa
17-20 October 2016

Distr.: General

ECA/CCDA/6/Inf.1
19 September 2016

Original: English

Concept note

The Paris Agreement: What next for Africa?

Introduction

The main theme of the Sixth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA–VI), organized under the auspices of the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) programme, will be “The Paris Agreement on climate change: What next for Africa?”. This builds on the Fifth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, which was held in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) and focused on revisiting article 2 of the Framework Convention, with the theme “Africa, climate change and sustainable development: What is at stake at Paris and beyond?”. Reviewing the Paris Agreement allows for a contextual analysis of what was at stake for Africa prior to COP21 and what the Agreement offers, thereby contributing to strategic orientation for African countries in moving forward with the implementation of the Agreement.

CCDA-VI aims to facilitate science-policy dialogue and provide a marketplace for innovative solutions that integrate climate change into development processes. It is important to engage with and embrace the Paris Agreement within the framework of Africa’s development aspirations as underscored in Agenda 2063, which embodies the vision of the “Africa we want”, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets global targets with a vision of “leaving no one behind”.

Objective

The overall objective of CCDA-VI is to understand the implications, nuances, challenges and opportunities of implementing the Paris Agreement for Africa in the context of the continent’s development priorities.

Specific objectives

1. Examine the implications of the Paris Agreement for Africa’s future economic growth and sustainable development agenda.
2. Deepen an understanding of the nuances in the decisions of COP21, particularly with regard to the means of implementation (capacity, finance and technology transfer), as well as the domestication of the Agreement in Africa in alignment with the national development priorities of African countries.
3. Identify strategies for implementing the Agreement especially through pan-African initiatives and institutions, public-private partnerships, and the engagement of State and non-State actors.
4. Provide a solution space for innovation and a platform for dialogue between State and non-State actors.
5. Facilitate networking between climate and development stakeholders.
6. Provide a platform to raise awareness of the importance of climate information services and enhance its uptake in development policy processes.
7. Explore new and evolving challenges in Africa related to climate change.

Background

COP21, which was held in Paris in December 2015, was highly applauded as a triumph for multilateralism as 196 States parties united and committed themselves to taking corrective action to limit the increase in the global average temperature this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The outcome of COP21 was received with relief, following the inability of the parties to reach a binding agreement at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen five years earlier. The fact that COP21 resulted in a binding agreement that allows for a continuation of dialogue and negotiation is in itself a significant achievement and step towards curbing climate change and supporting sustainable development.

Although Africa contributes to less than 4 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions, the continent is already being severely impacted by the adverse impacts of weather variability and climate change. Recently observed trends show shifts in rainfall patterns, with decreasing total rainfall for the primary agricultural season of March to May and increasing total rainfall for the October to December secondary season in the region of the Turkana Basin.¹ Similar shifts in rainfall patterns, and the climate system as a whole, have been observed across Africa over the past decades. For example, although El Niño and La Niña are established weather systems arising from variations in the temperature of the oceans, scientific evidence now shows that their characteristics – frequency and intensity – are being severely impacted by anthropogenic climate change.² In 2011 and 2012, the unusually strong La Niña resulted in a 70 per cent drop in expected rainfall in the Horn of Africa region, with widespread crop failure and heavy loss of livestock. Similarly, in 2015 El Niño caused widespread droughts in Eastern and Southern Africa, severely affecting not only the livelihoods of rural populations but also urban populations and key economic sectors and inputs. For example, the Kariba Dam that is the source of most of the electricity supply for Zambia and Zimbabwe almost shut down power production as the reservoir level dropped to 12 per cent of capacity.³ The loss of electricity production had knock-on effects on key economic sectors, leading to loss of employment, services, productivity and livelihood. Tackling climate change is therefore paramount if Africa's development objective as defined in Agenda 2063 is to be achieved.

The Paris Agreement heralds bold steps towards decarbonizing the global economy and reducing dependency on fossil fuels. Furthermore, unprecedented references to climate justice, human rights and the roles of non-State actors in addressing climate change are enshrined in the Agreement. However, the universalization of emissions reductions by all parties as opposed to the imposition of targets to reduce emissions on developed countries only (that is Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol) represents a sharp departure of the Paris Agreement from the principles of the Kyoto Protocol. This shift in defining responsibility untangled the difficulties in the negotiation on the differentiation of parties' obligations for reducing emissions following the growing

¹ See, for example, Liebmann, B. and others (2014). Understanding Recent Eastern Horn of Africa Rainfall Variability and Change. *Journal of Climate*, vol. 27, pp. 8630 – 8645.

² In a 2014 research paper published in *Nature Climate Change* (vol. 4, pp. 111–116), Cai and others show evidence for a doubling in the occurrences of El Niños in the future in response to greenhouse-induced warming (available from <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/v4/n2/full/nclimate2100.html>).

³ See, for example, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-08/world-s-biggest-dam-has-extremely-dangerous-low-water-levels> and <http://www.zaraho.org.zm/hydrology/lake-levels>.

emissions of economies in transition such as China, India and Brazil. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility provided a firewall to safeguard the obligations of Annex I Parties to Non-Annex I Parties beyond just emissions reduction and has raised major concerns going forward. This is especially true for African parties for whom ensuring that the binding commitments of Annex I Parties for their historical responsibilities for emissions reduction are respected remains a key principle of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The implications of the redefinition of common but differentiated responsibilities for Africa in the Paris Agreement are yet to be fully understood.

The concept of intended nationally determined contributions – a bottom-up pledge and review approach to curbing greenhouse gas emissions (unlike the top-down approach of the Kyoto Protocol) – emerged as the game changer and the unifying factor among the parties in concluding a long cycle of negotiations with the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Erected on voluntarism, the intended nationally determined contribution approach further changes the entire framework of the differentiation of commitments as previously characterized in the Kyoto Protocol. For the sake of steering towards an agreement, great strides were made in accommodating rather than negotiating the various views of the parties on different issues that resulted in nuances encapsulating the Agreement. As a result, the Paris Agreement is helmed in more nuanced approaches, especially on highly contested issues that constituted the pillars of previous negotiations, particularly with regard to means of implementation (including climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building), and that were settled as “decisions” of the COP rather than “provisions” of the Paris Agreement. With over 170 parties having so far signed the Paris Agreement and a number of parties having already ratified the agreement, it is anticipated that the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP22) will be mostly focus on issues pertaining to the implementation of the Agreement. It is therefore urgent that the nuances in the Paris Agreement be clarified and contextualized in the run-up to COP22, especially in the case of Africa, whose greenhouse gas emissions remain the lowest but which is already bearing the greatest burden from the adverse impacts of climate as evinced by the effects of the unusually strong El Niño of 2015 in East and Southern Africa. This is a precursor to complete buy-in and ownership of the Agreement by all parties to pave the way for smooth implementation.

Climate-induced impacts, such as frequent and prolonged droughts and floods, as well as environmental degradation, have created uncertainties that make livelihoods unattainable for rural and urban communities, resulting in new and emerging climate-related issues that call for urgent action. Migration is an example of such an issue that is increasingly taking centre stage in global policy and is being associated with climate change as a trigger and amplifying factor. Although migration at all temporal and spatial scales has a long history and multiple causes, uncertainties owing to climate variability and change in recent years are clearly making livelihoods unattainable. As a result, rural populations are increasingly moving to urban areas in search of employment and a better life. Such movements add to the pressures of urban communities, which are also being affected by climate change impacts, thus resulting in a complex induced movement of populations within and out of national boundaries – a phenomenon which has resulted in refugees described as “climate refugees”. It is important that the causal linkages between climate change and migration are better understood in order to take appropriate climate response measures to stabilize communities and improve livelihoods.

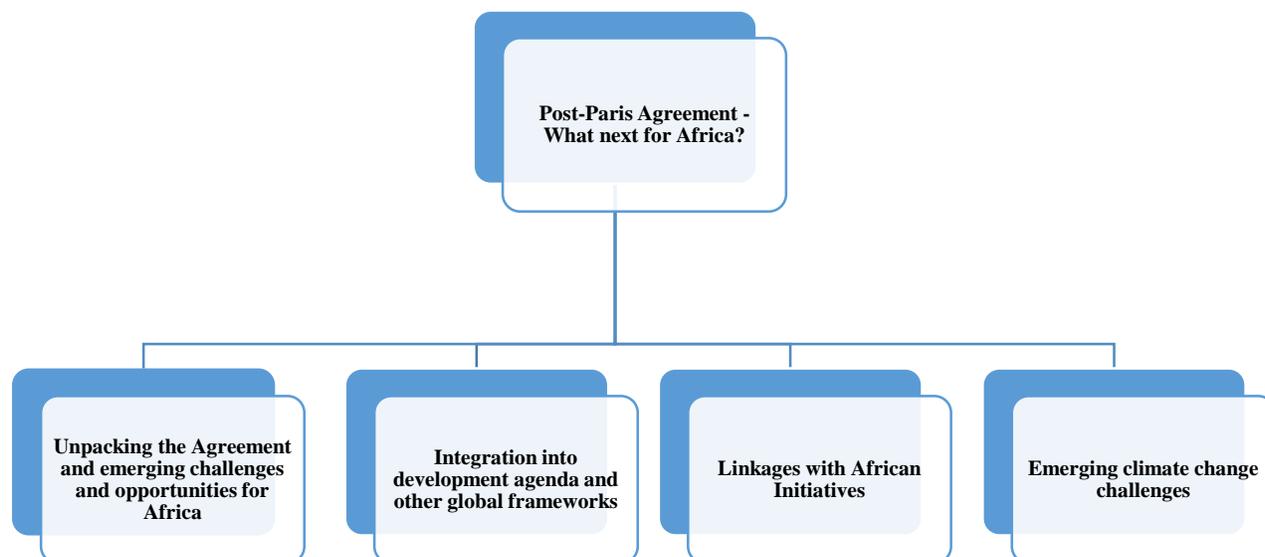
In addressing and responding to the impacts of climate change on socioeconomic development and environmental degradation in Africa, a number of key regional initiatives have been developed and adopted across multiple countries through partnerships and joint implementation. Such pan-African initiatives (for example, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, the Africa Adaptation Initiative, the ClimDev-Africa programme and the Africa Great Green Wall) have a key role to play in supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Similarly, the Agreement provides a unique opportunity to synergize these initiatives for maximum impact and efficient management and use of resources.

To better articulate the specific objectives and capture the implications of implementing the Paris Agreement for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa, the Conference will be organized under the following sub-themes as illustrated in figure 1:

1. Unpacking the Paris Agreement and emerging challenges and opportunities for Africa;
2. Integration of the Paris Agreement into Africa's development agenda and other global governance frameworks;
3. Linking African initiatives to the implementation of the Paris Agreement;
4. Emerging challenges from climate change.

Figure 1

Thematic structure of the CCDA-VI sub-themes



Sub-theme 1: Unpacking the Paris Agreement and emerging challenges and opportunities for Africa

The Paris Agreement aims to limit the increase in the global average temperature this century to “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to pursue efforts to “limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”. Its predecessor, the Kyoto Protocol, had no specific temperature goal but aimed to “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”. The Paris Agreement enshrined the core principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in different ways. For example, the Kyoto Protocol, with its top-down cap and trade mechanism, ensured in a legally binding way the “polluter pays” principle and the allocation of differentiated responsibility to developed countries to take the lead in combatting climate change and its adverse effects. The Paris Agreement on the other hand adopts a bottom-up self-differentiating mechanism of nationally determined contributions to climate action that is not legally binding and applies equally to all parties. In this respect, the Agreement represents a sharp departure from the Kyoto Protocol. The Agreement and its provisions need to be fully unpacked to better understand its implications for Africa, especially with regard to the core principles of the Convention and Africa’s development aspirations as defined in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This sub-theme will explore key issues related to the Paris Agreement, namely:

- Core principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in the Paris Agreement;
- Mitigation;
- Adaptation;
- Loss and damage;
- Means of implementation;
- Monitoring and reporting.

Sub-theme 2: Integration of the Paris Agreement into Africa’s development agenda and other global governance frameworks

Africa’s long-term development blueprint is Agenda 2063, which embodies the vision of the “Africa we want: a peaceful and prosperous Africa”, as well as the principle of “leaving no one behind” as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This demonstrates the complementarity between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sets the point of departure and entry for integrated implementation of the two agendas. However, adequate consideration of climate change as an integral priority is essential for the realization of the two agendas. Africa’s economic growth is currently dominated by the export of primary commodities and is dependent on climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. Continuing along this development path risks exacerbating climate change and environmental degradation and increasing poverty and exclusion, thus undermining the attainment

of the continent's development objectives. Structural transformation based on green industrialization provides the conduit through which sustainable and inclusive growth can happen in Africa. This requires substantial energy inputs as well as efficient management and use of natural resources. Africa is hugely endowed with all forms of energy resources, including fossil fuels and renewables. Against a background of falling cost of low-carbon technologies, the Paris Agreement provides a framework and opportunity for Africa to leapfrog and lead low-emission development pathways to curb dangerous climate change. In this regard, harmonization of the Paris Agreement with national development priorities as well as other global agreements, such as those on trade and disaster risk reduction, will be key in domesticating the Agreement in Africa.

Therefore, this sub-theme will address key issues relating to:

- The benefits and trade-offs in the implementation of the Paris Agreement for national and regional development agendas;
- The opportunities and challenges for joint implementation with other development agendas;
- Establishing coherence in the implementation of Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- The implications of the Paris Agreement for international trade and use of Africa's natural resources.

Sub-theme 3: African initiatives in support of the implementation of the Agreement

In an effort to address and respond to the impacts of climate change on socioeconomic development and tackling environmental degradation in Africa, a number of key regional initiatives have been developed and adopted across multiple countries through partnerships and joint implementation. Such initiatives include the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, the Africa Adaptation Initiative, the ClimDev-Africa programme, the Congo Basin Forest Fund, Climate Research for Development, the Great Green Wall, the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility, and the Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa programme. The objectives of these initiatives are aligned with the overall objective of the Paris Agreement. However, their operationalization has often been independent of one other and/or impeded by limited means of implementation. The means of implementation (including climate finance, capacity-building and transfer of environmentally sound technologies) framework of the Paris Agreement provides the opportunity to synergize and strengthen these initiatives, thereby enabling African economies to continue on a growth trajectory that is low-carbon, resource-efficient and climate-resilient.

This sub-theme will explore how these initiatives can be consolidated, enhanced and empowered to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Agreement within the framework of regional development agendas. Discussions around this sub-theme will dwell on the following:

- Regional support mechanisms and employment of regional approaches;

- Regional provision of means of implementation and modalities of access;
- Co-benefits of adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

Sub-theme 4: Linkages between climate change and migration

There is no evidence of direct causal linkages between climate change and migration. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that climate change might be amplifying population movements both within and across national boundaries. For example, the International Organization for Migration estimates that there could be up to 1 billion environmental migrants (“climate change refugees”) globally by 2050, moving either within their countries or across borders, on a permanent or temporary basis.⁴ This potential mass movement of populations could lead to political instability and civil unrest, exacerbating migration. Failure to tackle climate change now in a global concerted effort, therefore, is likely to make the issue of migration untenable in the future. In this regard, implementation of the Paris Agreement will contribute towards addressing climate-induced migration. Ensuring the implementation of the Paris Agreement must, therefore, remain the key focus of COP22, which is scheduled to be held in Morocco in November 2016.

This sub-theme will introduce the debate on the linkages between climate change and migration in order to stimulate further policy research on the topic and to influence the development of appropriate African policy positions towards global action on climate change and sustainable livelihoods for all. The issues to be addressed include:

- Understanding and quantifying the migration pressures linked to climate change;
- Incorporation of climate change adaptation initiatives into migration policies;
- Development of sectoral approaches to migration – such as mitigation and adaptation efforts in the energy, agriculture, water and urban sectors.

Format for CCDA-VI

CCDA-VI will employ three different approaches over four days in reaching out and convening the wide range of constituencies and actors engaged in climate change and development in Africa. By merging different platforms for dialogue and interaction between State and non-State actors, policymakers and researchers, young people, civil society organizations, negotiators and the private sector, CCDA-VI will facilitate and enrich the sharing of lessons, key research findings, outreach and policy uptake, as well as stimulate investments.

⁴ See <https://www.iom.int/definitional-issues>.

DAY 0

Pre-events: Partnerships

As has been the tradition of previous Conferences, this day is set aside for pre-event forums where civil society, non-State actors, policymakers, researchers, young people, other stakeholders and ClimDev-Africa partners will discuss topics related to the theme of the Conference with the aim of forging partnerships.

DAY 1

High-level policy dialogue

Day one of CCDA-VI will consist of a high-level panel convened to deliberate on key policy and strategy-related cross-cutting issues of climate change and sustainable development in Africa. The panel will discuss various economic growth pathways under a changing global landscape in positioning Africa's future growth trajectory, focusing on the following topics:

- Thinking beyond fossil fuels: Towards attaining sustainable and inclusive low-carbon development in Africa;
- National and regional options for addressing new and emerging climate change challenges in Africa;
- Regional and international partnerships for climate action in Africa.

DAY 2

Marketplace for climate services, technology and innovation

The focus of this day – the “Climate 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 policy uptake of the services. This day will showcase and share best practices for the development of climate services on the continent. There will be parallel sessions and exhibitions on each of the sub-themes.

The day will also include a “Solutions Forum” – a marketplace of ideas and an opportunity for civil society, experts, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders to contribute their solutions to long-standing challenges of climate change for Africa.

DAY 3

Research and innovative solutions

Within the framework of the Climate Research for Development programme, the day will consist of invited presentations of research papers, innovations and discussions relating to the four sub-themes of the Conference in parallel sessions.