
Concept note

ACPC donor round-table meeting

Supporting African countries with climate change response under the Paris Agreement

Background

The African Climate Policy Center (ACPC) was established at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to fulfill the need to mainstream climate change into development policy planning in Africa. A crucial consideration at the time was the impact of climate change on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the region. The ACPC is an integral part of the Climate Change and Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) programme, which was established at the request of African Heads of States and Government as a pan-African initiative with the mandate to support countries in their efforts to cope with the adverse effects of climate change, and integrate those concerns into national development agendas. Jointly implemented by the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and ECA, ClimDev-Africa capitalizes on the comparative advantages of the implementing partners to support countries and regional institutions.

ACPC is therefore engaged in fulfilling both the ECA mandate on climate change, under the General Assembly, and the African Heads of State mandate under ClimDev-Africa. The ECA mandate entails: supporting member States in formulating and implementing policy reforms, focusing on sectors in which green economy approaches could be fostered in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and improving the capacity of these member States and other stakeholders to implement and integrate climate change adaptation approaches into sectoral and national development policies, strategies and programmes, as a way of reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience to impacts. Alongside its core business at ECA, ACPC is also responsible for implementing the ClimDev-Africa programme, which is designed to: facilitate the generation of knowledge and uptake of climate information and services; promote the integration of climate change into policies and practices; and create an enabling environment for information dissemination, communication, lesson sharing and best practices. Human and

institutional capacity development remains a core business and an integral part of the programme's service package, which is designed to enhance Africa's participation in global discourses. Other components of the package are formulating national and regional policy and strategy, implementing actions focused on reducing climate risk and vulnerability, and capitalizing on emerging opportunities as a result of climate change.

The evolving landscape under the global climate negotiations and the shifting paradigm towards decarbonizing the world's economy call for major contemporary strategic changes by African countries in their pursuit of economic growth and consolidation of current gross domestic product growth rates, through the adoption of low-carbon and climate-resilient pathways. Contextualizing these transitions within current national development agendas requires ongoing support from a pan-African programme with the mandate given to ClimDev-Africa.

Unlike in the past, when Africa was relegated to the margins of global climate discourses, at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, African leaders and the African group of negotiators, with the support of ClimDev-Africa, demonstrated a new-found confidence and capacity, as they played a pivotal role in the achievement of the Paris Agreement, highly applauded as a significant milestone in its more comprehensive response to climate change, giving countries the latitude to take stock and progressively increase the ambition of their national climate actions. The Agreement is largely framed upon the intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) that universalize emission reduction by all parties, irrespective of their differentiated historical responsibilities of global emission levels. Unlike other regions, Africa has continued to show leadership in championing this collective goal and responsibility, and making good on its pledge to cut emissions.

The ClimDev-Africa programme provided timely support to African countries for the preparation of their INDCs. Indeed, it was the only African programme to provide comprehensive support services, including organizing national and international expert group meetings and preparing a methodological framework. It also provided technical and financial assistance directly to four countries. As a result, member countries expect ClimDev-Africa to continue in the same spirit by providing support for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and shaping the ongoing global discourses on aspects of the Agreement, such as loss and damage, and climate finance.

To ensure continuous provision of high quality services to countries, following numerous requests received by ECA from member States and through the ClimDev-Africa secretariat, ACPC will require new strategic partnerships and injection of financial resources. A new business plan, which builds on the strengths and lessons learnt in the first phase of the programme, has been prepared. It focuses on the programme's comparative advantage over other players that also provide support to African countries. Within the five-year (2016-2020) implementation period of the Paris Agreement, prior to the first stocktaking, African countries will require closely tied support to enable them to participate in ongoing global discourses to shape the content and context of the Agreement, in ways that safeguard Africa's core interest.

Main objective

The main objective of the round-table meeting is to share the ACPC strategy for interventions and initiatives with donors and development partners, in the Centre's continuing effort to support African countries in participating effectively in and shaping global processes on climate change, and in developing their national climate change response strategies, policies and implementation plans. This includes support in fulfilling their commitments on global agreements and conventions to which they are signatories, using enhanced partnership mechanisms between State and non-State actors.

Specific objectives

1. Presenting the ACPC strategy on:
 - Integrating climate change into ECA programmes, agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development
 - The ClimDev-Africa phase II business plan
2. Improving the depth of understanding of the activities of the ACPC and its niche areas of support to countries for implementing priority actions
3. Stimulating interest among development partners in ACPC activities
4. Mobilizing resources for programme implementation

Structure of the round-table discussion

Abdalla Hamdok, Acting Executive Secretary of ECA, will chair the meeting. His opening remarks will touch on the rationale for the round-table meeting. James Murombedzi, officer-in-charge of ACPC, will then present an overview of the ACPC strategy, emphasizing the institutional arrangements for the delivery of the programme, the operational structure and the key achievements and lessons learnt in phase I of the programme. He will highlight the ClimDev-Africa phase II business plan, the strategic direction, partnerships and key cross-cutting activities of the programme, and the human and financial resources required for its realization. Highlights of key project ideas intended to spur and catalyse the implementation of the Paris Agreement in countries will be presented. The round table will be open to remarks, discussion and questions.

Expected outcomes

1. Enhanced understanding of the role of ACPC in providing strategic guidance on integrating climate change into ECA programmes to support member States in domesticating the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda on sustainable development

2. Strategic partnerships for enhanced implementation forged with development partners
3. Resources for the implementation of the programme activities mobilized and pledged

Venue

The Economic Commission for Africa conference centre

Date

15 December 2016

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