



Policy Dialogue: New approaches for Climate Diplomacy in Africa

October 24, 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In light of the UN Security Council open debate on climate change and security that took place under German Council Presidency in July 2011 and subsequent developments, the German Federal Foreign Office is actively promoting this debate with a broad range of international stakeholders¹. The Scoping Seminar in Addis Ababa in November 2012, as well as the Regional Dialogue on security implications of climate change for Southern Africa that took place in Pretoria in September 2011 have already contributed to regional consultations on this subject on the African continent. Building on these events, adelphi in cooperation with the African Institute of Security Studies (ISS) and the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) are organising a 1-day dialogue event in Addis Ababa with a view to further develop an African perspective on the topic and to draw up joint strategies for preventive action and cooperation. The event aims to involve decision makers from the African Union and other regional organizations as well as research institutions and NGOs from across the continent.

Background: The Climate Security Challenge

On the international level, the debate on security implications of climate change has gained considerable momentum over the past years. Today, there is little doubt that climate change poses one of the key challenges for global economic development and human well-being, and may put peace and security at risk. At a regional level, the African Union Commission has engaged in a discourse on this topic, with a view to stimulating response and regional cooperation across Africa.

All African countries will be affected by climate change impacts – some more than others. Many studies point to significant potential reduction in agricultural productivity due to increased temperature. Sea level rise is likely to affect stability in coastal areas, and in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel erratic and low rainfall patterns are exacerbating already existing chronic challenges. Among the overall key risks identified at continent level are scarcity of water, food, and energy, caused by climate induced extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and storms. Increasing migration movements are subsequently expected.

In Africa the livelihood of substantial part of the population heavily depends on natural resources, which are often insufficient. The rates of undernourishment are high in various parts of Africa, and about 200 million people face water scarcity². Although violent conflict over limited goods is by no means inevitable, the absence of fair and effective mechanisms of conflict resolution is a

¹ See for more information on the German Federal Foreign Office initiative on climate security at www.climate-diplomacy.org

² Adano, Wario and Fatima Daudi 2012: Links between climate change, conflict and governance in Africa. ISS Paper No. 234. Pretoria: ISS. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/Paper_234.pdf



risk to peace and stability³. In this sense climate change can be a “threat multiplier” in regions where dire development needs meet natural stresses.

Vulnerability is, however, a consequence of impacts and lack of resilience, including adaptive capacity. Development understood as enhancing governance capacity, building robust institutions and promoting education fosters societal resilience and is therefore necessary to deal with climate change. At the same time climate change can undermine these efforts if it is not responded to adequately⁴.

Furthermore, competition for resources that is likely to become more severe due to climate change has a global dimension. For instance, as the worldwide demand for food increases, fertile land in all parts of the world including Africa becomes an ever more desirable good⁵. The same is true for fossil fuels, an issue connected intimately to climate change mitigation. On the regional scale, transboundary water management is gaining importance. 59 of the 263 international river basins are located in Africa. The Chad Lake, the Zambezi and the Nile Basins are among those put under greatest pressure by drier climate. To mitigate possible conflicts enhanced regional cooperation and adjustment of existing agreements is needed⁶.

To address this challenge, a new profile for *Climate Diplomacy* is evolving, using the full range of available policies, including development cooperation, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation. The aim is to move from risk analysis of climate-related threats to preventive action. Climate Diplomacy and its emphasis on preventive action could offer potential pathways for regional cooperation and benefit sharing, and can create new chances for economic and social development, e.g. through the implementation of sustainable solutions in the energy and water sectors and more generally, through joint strategies for a low carbon economy and climate resilient green economy strategies.

Objectives of the Regional Dialogue

In the light of the challenges outlined above, the German Federal Foreign Office aims to continue the process kicked-off with the UN Security Council open debate and support a dialogue focusing on the climate change, conflict, and development nexus in Africa. The dialogue event aims to discuss the implications of climate change in Africa for sectors such as water, food, agriculture, energy and trade, and the consequences for resource security, livelihoods, cooperation and peace in the region. The event will build on last year’s scoping seminar in Addis Ababa and will take the discussions further in developing well informed recommendations on the possible role of foreign policy as well as international and regional cooperation in tackling the challenge of climate change in Africa. In its conclusions the dialogue should, among others, focus on the question on how to best raise awareness for the topic among decision makers in the region and how to bring the topic higher on the agenda of the African Union (AU). Regionally-active organisations such as ACPC, IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC, and CEWARN will be consulted in the design of the dialogue and their participation is actively sought.

³ ACCORD 2011: Conflict Trends. Environment, Climate Change and Conflict. Issue 2. Durban: ACCORD. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from http://www.accord.org.za/downloads/ct/ct_2011_2.pdf; Adano and Daudi 2012.

⁴ Berenter, Jared 2012: “Ground Truthing” Vulnerability and Adaptation in Africa. Austin: CCAPS. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from <http://strausscenter.org/ccaps/climate-vulnerability/news/ground-truthing-vulnerability.html>

⁵ Adano and Daudi 2012.

⁶ ACCORD 2011.



The event aims to bring together around 30-40 experts from the climate policy and development community, as well as the field of foreign relations and security. This includes decision-makers from the African Union and other regional organisations, representatives from Germany and other bilateral partners, research organisations and NGOs who can help to address, inter alia, the following questions.

Key Questions

- How does climate change impact on livelihoods and development in Africa?
- What are the causal effects and links between climate change, development and conflict in Africa?
- What are concrete examples/case studies where climate change impacts contributed to the evolution of conflict?
- What conclusions can we draw from these examples and what lessons can we learn for the national, regional and international policy community?
- What are potential solutions to enhance cooperation and peace in this context? What role does adaptation and climate resilience play in this context?
- What are the possible roles domestic governments can play to promote these solutions?
- What can be the specific contributions foreign policy, diplomacy and technical assistance can play?
- What are key recommendations on the national, regional and international level (building the link to the upcoming UN FCCC negotiations in Warsaw where suitable)?

Partnership

The initiation of a Regional Dialogue aims to strengthen interconnections between European and African actors, in particular the AU, but also regional organisations in Africa. The German Federal Foreign Office and adelphi are working in close collaboration with the African Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and the South-Africa based think tank One World to conduct research and implement the event.