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Side event

Africa in the post-Kyoto climate governance framework

I. Introduction

Climate change has significant and unequivocal implications for Africa's development. The 2012 revised Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Framework Programme notes that addressing climate change has become central to the continent's development and poverty reduction agenda. Poorer countries and communities will suffer earliest and hardest because of weaker resilience and greater reliance on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture. In Africa, recent modeling indicates that a temperature increase of 2°C could mean a loss of 4.7 per cent of gross national product, most of it as a result of loss in the agricultural sector. A temperature rise of 2.5–5°C would be worse: hunger for 128 million, 108 million affected by flooding and a sea-level rise of 15–95 cm.

Although the continent contributes only 3.8 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions, Africa's countries are among the most vulnerable. Climate variability lies behind much of the prevailing poverty, food insecurity and weak economic growth in Africa today. Climate change will increase this variability; the severity and frequency of droughts, floods and storms will increase, leading to more water stress. Changes in agricultural, livestock and fisheries productivity will occur, and the continent will face further food insecurity as well as a spread of water-related diseases, particularly in tropical areas. Some 200 million of the poorest people in Africa are food insecure, many through their dependence on climate sensitive livelihoods – predominantly rain-fed agriculture. Temperature increases and changes in mean rainfall and evaporation are likely to become ever greater and more damaging to livelihoods through the twenty-first century.

The Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have become important spaces for the continuing global effort to refine and strengthen the

* The Specialized Technical Committee replaces the Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance (CAMEF) and the Conference of African Ministers of Integration (COMAI). The Specialized Technical Committee brings together ministers of finance, monetary affairs, economic planning and integration.

international collaborative and regulatory framework on climate change and to improve global climate governance. The Conferences are attended by all Government parties and many non-State actors, including the private sector, civil society representatives, and bilateral and multilateral institutions. The twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21), to be held in Paris in December 2015, is particularly significant in that it will usher into existence the post-Kyoto climate order, set to come into being by 2020.

While initially African participation in the Conferences was fragmented and uncoordinated, it has increasingly become more organized. Recognizing that Africa stands to be most affected by climate change while contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions, member States of the African Union have progressively begun to articulate a common position on climate change and to develop common positions in the negotiations through a streamlined coordination mechanism involving the African Group of Negotiators, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change.

COP 21 will be a landmark event in the development of the global climate governance framework, especially for Africa, which contributes least to atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, but is already most affected by the impacts of climate change and most at risk from increased global warming. Already, climate change is posing a serious threat to Africa's development potential, and temperature increases above 2°C will spell disaster for the continent. COP 21 will seek to establish a successor climate regime to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2015. For Africa, a progressive agreement in Paris should be ambitious and as close as possible to the recommendations of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and should include:

- (a) The adoption of a binding climate change agreement which addresses the key pillars of the Bali Action Plan and is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;
- (b) A strong commitment to keep the temperature increase below 1.5°C;
- (c) An emphasis on the importance of adaptation for Africa;
- (d) Additional and adequate finance, including a strong commitment to capitalize the Green Climate Fund.

In preparation for COP 21, ClimDev-Africa has already launched several preparatory activities to support the development of the African common position on the post-Kyoto agreement. The African Climate Policy Centre convened a meeting of the African Group of Negotiators in Addis Ababa from 21 to 23 January 2015. The meeting traced the evolution of the African position in global climate governance from the inception of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, discussed major milestones in the trajectory of the Convention, identified key issues for consideration in the process leading up to Paris, and clarified the key elements of the emerging common African position on climate change. ClimDev-Africa will also provide support for the upcoming session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, and the meeting of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change. These milestone meetings will culminate in the hosting of the African participants in COP 21 at a proposed Africa Pavilion in Paris.

The main negotiation document for COP 21 has been published. This side event will discuss the main issues emerging out of the document and seek to place the implications of it in the African perspective. For Africa, the key themes in the negotiations emanate from decision 1/CP.19 adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its nineteenth session, which requests "the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action to further elaborate, beginning at its first session in 2014, elements for a draft negotiating text"(mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building and transparency of action and support) and to identify,

“by the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties, the information that Parties will provide when putting forward their contributions, without prejudice to the legal nature of the contributions”. Thus far, the key issues are:

- (a) Pre-2020 mitigation ambition;
- (b) Post-2020 agreement;
- (c) Adaptation;
- (d) Finance;
- (e) Technology and capacity-building.

II. Pre-2020 mitigation ambition

Parties are discussing ways to increase the level of mitigation ambition in the pre-2020 period (2015–2020), with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all parties. The aim is to close the ambition gap between the aggregate effect of the Parties’ current mitigation pledges and an aggregate pathway consistent with maintaining a likely chance of holding the increase in global warming below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Major issues in the negotiations include concerns about low levels of mitigation ambition in the pre-2020 pledges of developed countries (lower than developing countries); low levels of finance, technology and capacity-building to enable mitigation actions by developing countries (no roadmap for finance to 2020); inadequate progress in implementing concrete mitigation actions to curb warming; and efforts to shift responsibilities away from developed countries under the Convention towards international cooperative initiatives and the private sector.

The African Group is calling for, among other things, an acceleration of efforts under this work stream; more concrete mechanisms to move from discussions of options in technical expert meetings to implementation of mitigation actions; specific efforts to create a global support programme for renewable energy; and more effective implementation by developed countries of existing commitments relating to their mitigation targets (e.g. under the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention), as well as finance, technology transfer and capacity-building. How well are Africa’s concerns represented in the final post-2015 agreement, and with what implications for Africa’s sustainable and climate resilient development?

III. Post-2020 agreement

Parties are negotiating a new climate agreement under the Convention that will be applicable to all parties. The agreement – in the form of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force – is to be agreed by the 2015 Paris Conference of the Parties and to come into effect by 2020. The two main issues currently under discussion are in relation to the elements of the agreement (whether it will cover mitigation, adaptation, technology, finance, capacity and transparency, and how) and contributions (the scope and information to be provided in the intended nationally determined contributions by Parties to the new agreement).

Major issues include whether the post-2020 agreement will cover all the elements in a balanced and comprehensive manner, or focus asymmetrically on mitigation, carbon markets and transparency or measuring, reporting and verification, to the exclusion of adaptation, finance, technology or capacity (all of which are important to Africa). The concern with the latter approach is that it will result in a weaker international regime than the Kyoto Protocol for developed countries, and a stronger one for developing countries, without adequate provisions for support.

The African Group is calling for a comprehensive agreement covering all elements in a balanced way, with general commitments and global objectives, specific commitments by parties,

operational mechanisms and provisions on accountability, compliance and review. On contributions, the group has stated that these must be in conformity with the Convention, respect differentiation between developed and developing countries and build on established Convention obligations. Developed countries should put forward contributions addressing adaptation support, finance, technology and capacity (as well as mitigation) as failure to do so will limit prospects for a balanced outcome in Paris.

IV. Adaptation

Parties are discussing adaptation in the context of the post-2020 agreement as well as in the ongoing discussions under the Convention, including the least developed countries work programme, Nairobi work programme and Cancun Adaptation Framework. Discussions are focusing, among other things, on the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans, and ways to address loss and damage. According to the African Development Bank, most studies suggest adaptation costs in Africa will be \$20–30 billion per annum over the next 10 to 20 years.

A major issue is how to include adaptation in the post-2020 agreement in a way that has legal and political parity with mitigation, and does not involve a downgrading of adaptation discussions under a strengthened international climate regime under the Convention. Also of concern are the low levels of finance, technology and capacity-building currently available to enable implementation of adaptation actions at the national level (i.e. to support the move from adaptation planning to adaptation action).

The African Group has recognized the need to prioritize adaptation, ensure funding of full costs, increase access to additional public, grant-based resources, expedite support for national adaptation planning and ensure the Adaptation Committee gives direction to relevant fund mechanisms, and to speed up work on implementation of adaptation plans. It has also urged operationalization of the new loss and damage mechanism agreed by the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Warsaw.

V. Finance

Parties are discussing finance in the context of the post-2020 agreement as well as under other bodies of the Convention-the Durban Platform, the Standing Committee, and in various subsidiary bodies.

Major issues include how to ensure full implementation of existing Convention finance commitments and avoid shifting of responsibility towards the private sector or to developing countries under the new agreement. A clear pathway for finance is required between now and 2020; efforts are also required to ensure full and early capitalization of the Green Climate Fund and to secure finance in the short term to enable the preparation of intended nationally determined contributions by developing countries.

The African Group has identified finance as a priority. It has called for a clear needs assessment and roadmap with milestones to 2020, and has emphasized that \$100 billion must be a floor for finance, with larger amounts to post-2020. Finance in 2014 should be \$32 billion; in 2015, it should be \$44 billion. At least \$15 billion should be made available by November 2014 for the Green Climate Fund. There must also be clarity about long-term finance for the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

VI. Technology transfer and capacity-building

Technology and capacity issues also arise in the context of the post-2020 agreement and in other work under the Convention, including the Technology Mechanism of the Convention.

The African Group wants to ensure barriers preventing transfer are removed, including the appropriate treatment of intellectual property rights and removal of patents from certain climate-related technologies. They have expressed the importance of operationalizing the technology transfer mechanism, and extending the mandate of the Durban Forum on Capacity-Building.

VII. Conclusion

One topical event which would also be of great assistance to the African Group is a discussion about the group's pre-2020 mitigation ambition proposal focusing on renewable energy. The proposed side event will explore issues of renewable energy as a key element of technology transfer in the transition to the green economy.

A second focus could be on the need for a “comprehensive and balanced” post-2020 agreement to meet the needs of Africa, with speakers from developed and developing countries speaking on the need for coverage of all the elements – mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, capacity and transparency. This would help to build some momentum and counter the tendency (despite Africa's efforts) towards a narrow mitigation-centric outcome.

A third could be on adaptation in the post-2020 period. While some initial thinking has been done about how adaptation and loss and damage would fit in the post-2020 agreement, there are clearly opportunities for further consideration. How can adaptation receive legal and political parity? What specific mechanisms are required to enhance implementation of adaptation plans? How can support be scaled up? What are Africa's specific needs?

A fourth focus of discussion will be on the importance of a finance roadmap and prospects for the Green Climate Fund in light of recent announcements of significant financial pledges (e.g. the United States of America and Japan this week together pledging \$4.5 billion), and what this means for Africa. Africa's Green Climate Fund members and lead finance coordinators, along with selected donor countries, could offer thoughts. It could be an opportunity to help African countries think about how to access this finance.

In addition to the issues arising directly out of the negotiations, other topical issues that will be discussed will include issues related to community innovations and adaptations to climate change, accounting for climate change, agriculture and food security, and integration of climate information into planning and policy processes.