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Africa spending more than its fair share for climate adaptation, a new study reveals

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6 November 2017 (ECA) - Findings of a new study jointly commissioned by the UNDP Regional Office for Africa, and the African Climate Policy Centre at the Economic Commission for Africa, is dismissing the insinuation that African countries are not investing in their own climate adaptation responses and are instead waiting on the international community as recipients of support.

The study is being implemented by two United Kingdom centres; Climate Scrutiny and Mokoro, to provide estimates of Africa's public expenditure on adaptation as a proportion of the total cost for adaptation. It shows that public expenditure on adaptation by African countries constitutes 20 percent of their total needs presently.

Although the level of investment as a proportion of GDP expenditure varies among countries, it ranges between 2-9 percent of GDP; and represents more than other forms of expenditure in public services such as healthcare and education.

The study reveals this is significantly higher than the adaptation resource flow from international sources.

"The disproportionate share of investment in adaptation as opposed to its smallest share of contribution to the global GHG emissions, needs to be fully recognised and boosted under global financing mechanism for climate response, especially under the implementation of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs)," notes the report.

Some of the study's key findings are that, African countries are already making a major contribution to adaptation that constitutes 20 percent of the total adaptation expenditure required to reduce potential economic impacts of climate change; that for Africa as a whole, the estimated adaptation gap is about 80 percent; and that the adaptation gap is greater than 90% in nine countries. Most of these countries face major exposure and sensitivity to climate change risks as well as fiscal challenges.

Countries that have reduced the potential impact of climate change by more than 20 percent, include those with low climate change risks like Liberia, Namibia and Zimbabwe; high expenditure, for example Ethiopia, Gambia, Zambia; and lower risk and good expenditure countries like Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda.

The objectives of the Review of African Commitment to Adaptation was to provide some initial estimates of the current spending on adaptation by African governments, and to assess the extent to which this funding meets the scale of the adaptation challenge as determined by the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other assessments.

Commenting on the findings of the study, ACPC's Johnson Nkem Ndi said: "There is a growing political will and socio-economic motivation in addressing climate change in Africa's development agenda as demonstrated by the level of public expenditure on adaptation to climate change in the continent."

Most adaptation expenditure in Africa is primarily linked to development expenditure that provides good benefits with current climate conditions.

Estimates of the adaptation expenditure were provided by classifying the most recent public finance data, preferably actual expenditure data rather than budget data, if it is available.

Actual data for 10 countries, and data obtained from the internet for additional 24 countries were used for the analyses in this study. The entire analyses in the study does not include expenditure by development partners that is outside the budget.

The study notes that despite its miniscule share of responsibility for the causes of climate change, Africa has always been labelled as a tenuous recipient of development assistance, with unending expectations of support in addressing climate impacts on its development.

While this stigma is baseless, it remains to be fully disbarred using empirical studies demonstrating regional investments for climate adaptation by the countries.

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