ECA plays leading role in Africa’s fight against climate change

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 19, 2021 (ECA) The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is working with sister United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral partners to align global climate goals to the continent’s action agenda.

At the forefront of enhancing national, regional, and continental climate adaptation preparedness and response efforts is Africa’s lead climate think-tank, the ECA’s African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) that is based in Addis Ababa.

In the “State of the Global Climate Report” that is being jointly launched today by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Secretary-General, Petteri Taalas, the ECA is delighted to have made extensive contributions touching on the African continent through the ACPC.

The “State of the Global Climate Report” is being released ahead of the much awaited “Leaders’ Summit on Climate” convened by U.S. President Joe Biden to coincide with the Earth Day commemorations on April 22.

The ACPC has been at the forefront of mainstreaming climate change and development in Africa and two years ago, it gleaned over its knowledge bank and offered its expert submissions on the continent, leading to the authoritative production of “The State of the Climate in Africa 2019” report, a multi-agency publication spearheaded by the WMO.

The “State of the Global Climate Report 2020” emphasizes on the critical need for world leaders to increase ambitions on climate action to curb emissions.
“This report is part of the effort to close this gap,” says ECA Executive Secretary, Vera Songwe. “The contribution of the Economic Commission for Africa to the production of this report, through the African Climate Policy Centre, seeks to highlight the nexus between climate change and development, and to emphasize that building forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic requires a development approach that is green, sustainable and climate resilient, informed by the best available science.”

The “State of the Global Climate Report 2020” stratifies the need for a development approach that is green-oriented. The limited uptake and use of climate information services in development planning and practice in Africa is due in part to the scarcity of reliable, adequate, and timely climate data.

**Supporting Africa’s responses**

According to the ACPC, climate change is directly affecting Africa’s ability to realize the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the continental development framework as outlined in Agenda2063, cascading into national plans.

In 2019, the ACPC rolled out its four-year strategy dubbed “Delivering Climate Resilient Development Policies in Africa 2019-2023” as a solution to Africa’s adaptation and mitigation capacity needs. So far, this strategic roadmap has guided the interventions by ACPC in bolstering the African Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 that is being championed by the African Union Commission (AUC).

“ACPC conceptualized and launched a study to update the AU Climate Change Strategy. The objective was to update the draft strategy, taking into cognizance developments since the initial draft was produced including the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2063 and the COVID-19 pandemic,” says James Murombedzi, who heads the ACPC.

The AU climate strategy is expected to underscore the development of national climate change and low-emissions development strategies across the continent focusing on issues such as investments for building resilience, capacity building, resource mobilization and nature-based solutions.

“The African Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 is designed to be a framework to guide actions in member states towards low-carbon emissions development. The continent must adopt green pathways for economic growth. This is necessary as climate change is disruptive on national economies, ecosystems and livelihoods,” says Ms. Songwe.

**Africa goes for High-Ambitious targets**

The ACPC has also emboldened the member states in raising their ambitions towards the global net-zero emissions targets by assisting them in revising their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in line with the Paris Agreement and ahead of the global stock take.
scheduled for 2023.

“The focus of the ACPC framework is on ensuring that the NDC is integrated into wider development policy and practice,” Mr. Murombedzi says. “In this way the framework would build upon ongoing activities by member states and other partners by emphasizing the developmental context of climate action.”

Liberia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi are among the countries benefiting from ACPC’s support on climate change mainstreaming.

Building the resilience of African economies, societies and ecosystems to climate change is now a core pillar of the ACPC as it helps implement the continent’s climate action blueprint. In August 2020, ECA and the Ethiopian government jointly unveiled a project to enhance nature-based solutions for water resources infrastructure and community resilience. The project is currently augmenting the resilience of hydropower infrastructure, ecosystems and livelihoods under the Green Legacy Project, an Ethiopian government eco-friendly initiative.