

## Enhanced Action on Adaptation to Climate Change

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## **I. Overall Context**

### **1.1 A Brief Overview of Climate Change Impacts in Africa**

1. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) <sup>1</sup>, by 2020 between 75 million and 250 million people in Africa are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change. A significant decrease in the area suitable for agriculture is projected and by 2020 it is anticipated that in some countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50%<sup>2</sup>. This is expected to adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition in the African continent. Towards the end of the 21st century, projected sea-level rise will affect low-lying coastal areas and major coastal urban agglomerations with large populations. It is estimated that the cost of adaptation could amount to 5-10% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Africa. In short, according to the IPCC, Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change because of multiple stresses and low capacity to adapt<sup>3</sup>.

### **1.2 Previous and On-going Initiatives on Adaptation to Climate Change**

2. Under the UN Climate Change Convention, issues relating to adaptation are addressed through the Convention's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)<sup>4</sup>. The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change is one of the programmes that have been put in place to address adaptation. During its first phase (2005-2010), the Nairobi Work Programme put emphasis on efforts to improve the understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change and make informed decisions on practical adaptation actions with a focus on: methods and tools; data and observations; climate modeling; climate-related risks and extreme events; socio-economic information; adaptation planning and practices; research; technologies for adaptation; and economic diversification as an instrument for adaptation. For the remaining two years, the emphasis of the Nairobi Programme will be on economic diversification and adaptation planning and practices, on education, training and public awareness, and the promotion of regional centres.

3. A number of workshops on adaptation have been organised by the UNFCCC Secretariat. By 2007, the Secretariat had organised three regional workshops for Africa, Asia and Latin America and one expert meeting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The aim of these workshops and meetings was to enable Parties and other experts from these four regions to reflect on their regional priorities; to facilitate information exchange and integrated assessments within and between regions; and to help identify specific adaptation needs and concerns<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See IPCC, 2007: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson, Eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 7-22. page 13

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> See UNFCCC (2007); *Climate Change: Impacts, Vulnerabilities and Adaptation in Developing Countries*, at page 10

<sup>5</sup>The workshops were organised by UNFCCC pursuant to Decision 1/CP.10, paragraph 8

4. The UNFCCC also recognized the special situations of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and initiated the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) in 2001 at COP7 to focus on enhancing adaptive capacity to climate variability. Rather than focusing on scenario-based modelling to assess future climate vulnerability and long-term policy at country-wide level, NAPAs give prominence to community-level input and build upon that to identify priority activities. The NAPAs focus on urgent and immediate needs - those for which further delay could increase vulnerability or lead to increased costs at a later stage. NAPAs are designed to use existing information; and no new research is needed. They must be action-oriented and country-driven and be flexible and based on national circumstances. As part of the LDC Work Programme, 39 LDCs of which 27 are in Africa have completed NAPAs and submitted them to the UNFCCC for funding implementation under the LDC Fund that is managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). But funding for implementing the NAPAs has so far been very limited in spite of the fact that these countries are now ready for the implementation phase.

5. Funding for adaptation is provided through the following funds; (i) the GEF Trust Fund; (ii) the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) under the Convention; (iii) the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) under the Convention; and (iv) Adaptation Fund (AF) under the Kyoto Protocol, which is only expected to become operational later in 2009. Besides the limited resources of the above funds<sup>6</sup> it is important to note that Africa's access to the above funds has been impeded by a number of factors, including the complex procedural formalities.

6. The need for capacity building to assist parties especially Least Developed Countries, and Small Islands Developing States to respond to climate change is recognized. In 2001, parties agreed on capacity building frameworks to support developing countries. Parties also agreed to conduct periodic reviews of the capacity building frameworks to address emerging issues. A first comprehensive review of the framework was completed and the second comprehensive review of the implementation of the capacity-building framework in developing countries was initiated in June 2008 and should be completed by COP 15 (December 2009). A report on the review of the capacity building in developing countries is expected to result into, among other things, (i) evaluation of the effectiveness of capacity-building activities in developing countries, (ii) lessons learned and best practices, (iv) future opportunities, challenges and barriers, (iii) possible areas for improvement; (iv) the availability of and access to resources, and the effectiveness of their deployment; and (v) the sustainability of capacity-building activities and the extent of national engagement.

### ***1.3 Status of Negotiations on Adaptation***

7. In 2007, the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP 13) resolved to urgently enhance implementation of the Convention and launched the Bali Action Plan which identifies five specific issues relating to adaptation that should be addressed and they include following: (i) international cooperation to support urgent implementation of adaptation actions taking into account *inter alia* African countries affected by drought, desertification and floods; (ii) risk management and risk reduction strategies; (iii) disaster reduction strategies and means to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries; (iv) economic diversification to build resilience; and (v) ways to encourage multilateral bodies to support adaptation initiatives<sup>7</sup>.

8. At the negotiating meeting in June 2009, many developing Parties agreed on the need for a new framework on enhanced adaptation to address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable countries, particularly Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island developing states (SIDS). Spearheaded by the G77, the proposed Framework for Action on Adaptation is designed to facilitate and mobilise

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<sup>6</sup> See Financing brief for more detail.

<sup>7</sup> See Decision 1/CP.13, *Bali Action Plan*

support and actions on adaptation, to guide the Parties and to provide a basis for their activities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. Parties are encouraged to take the Framework into account in their cooperation with and support to relevant intergovernmental, regional and non governmental organisations as well as the private sector. The Framework should cover areas for enhanced action including, inter alia: (a) supporting the implementation of immediate priorities and needs as identified in NAPAs; (b) integrating adaptation into development and sectoral policies and practices, to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability; (c) establishing and strengthening enabling environments to support, enable, enhance and incentivise adaptation planning and actions; (d) mobilising means of implementation including finance, technology and capacity-building for adaptation; and (e) monitoring and review of effectiveness of adaptation actions.

9. However, agreement on the contents of the Framework is far from being reached. Whereas most developing countries and LDCs called for a comprehensive international programme on adaptation with scaled-up finance and legal obligations, some developed Parties have expressed concern on proposals related to the creation of a legally binding adaptation framework. Some developed countries have also insisted on linking the provision of financial resources to support adaptation to commitments by advanced developing countries such as China and India to undertake mitigation of climate change in their own countries<sup>8</sup>. Generally, the trend of the discussions is less on an enhanced adaptation framework and more on mitigation actions such as discussions on Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs).

10. In summary, the contentious issues in the current negotiations on adaptation revolve around the need to recognize the urgency, immediacy and greater attention and efforts toward adaptation to minimise the climate impact, particularly on vulnerable LDCs and SIDS and to adopt a comprehensive framework for adaptation, its means of implementation and monitoring and reviewing including: (i) ensuring financial and technology transfer commitments by developed country Parties – the G77 & China propose that those shall be legally binding; (ii) ensuring that finance for the Adaptation Framework be new, predictable, adequate, grant-based and additional to official development assistance (ODA); (iv) whether financial support for adaptation should be under the supervision of the Conference of Parties (COP); and (v) whether and how rigorous financial and technology transfer support for the Adaptation Framework by developed countries should be monitored.

## **II. Africa's Concerns and Expectations<sup>9</sup>**

11. Africa's concerns and expectations on the issue of adaptation to climate change in the anticipated Copenhagen agreement are informed by the fact that; Africa is the most vulnerable continent to climate change given its low capacity to adapt; and international cooperation on implementation of adaptation in Africa is urgent and must be accorded the same level of priority and emphasis as that given to mitigation. Discussions on an effective adaptation framework should include the following essential elements; (i) improved quality and availability of climate information; (ii) the capacity for climate change and impacts modelling; (iii) the urgent need to integrate climate change in development planning and poverty reduction strategies as opposed to a project-based approach which forms the basis of the NAPAs; and (iv) institutional reforms within donor policies and processes to achieve enhanced action on adaptation to climate change. With respect to integration of climate change into development planning and poverty reduction strategies, it is important to note that the Third African Ministers Conference on Financing for Development (Kigali, Rwanda in May 2009) called on African governments to "strengthen their planning and budgeting frameworks taking into account climate change needs, and their integration into national

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<sup>8</sup> See UNFCCC; Revised Negotiating Text published at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awglca6/eng/inf01.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Most of the material in this section has been obtained from the submission made by Algeria to the UNFCCC on behalf of the African Group in April 2009 available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/awglca6/eng/misc04p01.pdf>

and sectoral development strategies and ...strengthen the national coordination function for climate change". According to the recent guidance by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), this challenge applies equally well to external development partners which are facing similar constraints such as insufficient expertise among their staff on issues related to climate adaptation and the dominance of project-based approach to climate challenges.

12. The African Group in the climate change negotiation process has proposed the following measures to achieve enhanced action on adaptation:

(i) ***Establishment of the Adaptation Action Programme:*** It is proposed that a new adaptation programme should have the following essential elements: (i) implement adaptation measures that reduce vulnerability and build resilience of developing countries to climate change impacts; (ii) provide access to finance, technology and capacity building for implementing adaptation measures; (iii) promote coherence and facilitate linkages with other international, regional and national programmes on adaptation; (iv) be undertaken in the context of the principles and commitments of developed countries under the UN Framework on Climate Change Convention; and (v) reflect indigenous knowledge and practice of African countries.

(ii) ***Provision of financial resources, technology and capacity building to implement the Adaptation Action Programme:*** It is proposed that; (i) provision of financial and technical support by developed country Parties for adaptation programmes in developing countries should be legally binding with provisions of ensuring compliance as well as monitoring, reporting and verification mechanisms in light of the provisions of the UN Framework on Climate Change Convention and given the historical responsibility of climate change by developed countries<sup>10</sup>; (ii) financial, technological and capacity building resources provided to address all key areas of the Adaptation Action Programme should be new, sufficient, predictable and sustainable; (iii) by the year 2020, the scale of financial flows from developed countries to support adaptation in developing countries must be USD 67 billion per year (*the above figure corresponds to 0.2-0.8% of the current global investment flows or just 0.06-0.21% of the projected global GDP in the year 2030*<sup>11</sup>. *It is therefore, a realistic proposal*); (v) developed country Parties should commit public financing (at least 0.5% of their GDP) for adaptation and the process of determining contributions of developed country Parties should take into account historical contribution of greenhouse gases; and (vii) the Adaptation Action Programme should recognise that climate change imposes an additional burden on developing countries and finance for adaptation must therefore be additional to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

### **III. Recommendations to Parties**

13. In order to move forward the discussions on adaptation to climate change, it is recommended that parties should consider the following:

#### ***African countries:***

- Integrate climate change into development planning and poverty reduction strategies.
- Put in place appropriate institutional frameworks to address adaptation needs.
- Educate and sensitize all stakeholders on the urgent need to implement adaptation strategies.

#### ***Developed country Partners:***

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<sup>10</sup> See Articles 4.4, 4.8 and 4.9 of the UNFCCC

<sup>11</sup> UNDP (September 2008); *The Bali Action Plan: Key Issues in the Climate Negotiations-Summary for Policy Makers*, at page 10

- Take serious and concrete steps to mobilise financial resources (including public finances) to finance adaptation to climate change in Africa bearing in mind that the provision of financial resources is a commitment under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Support the development of regional initiatives such as the Clim-Dev Africa Programme and its African Climate Policy Centre (a joint initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission).
- Make adjustments to development assistance policies and processes with a view to more effectively addressing adaptation needs in poor and vulnerable countries.