



Economic Commission  
for Africa

# Africa Climate Advisory BULLETIN

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## **Africa's Consensus Agenda for CSD-15**

### **I. Introduction**

The overriding sustainable development challenge in Africa is poverty eradication. Indeed, the African Ministerial Statement to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) identifies poverty eradication as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Africa is the only region in the world where poverty has increased both in absolute and relative terms.

Furthermore, malnutrition, disease, environmental degradation, natural resource depletion, poor and inadequate infrastructure, unemployment and weak institutional capacities continue to pose serious development challenges for Africa. This state of affairs is exacerbated by recurrent natural disasters and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is reversing decades of gains in social indicators and imposing costs on Africa at least double those in any other developing regions, thus undermining sustainable economic growth. It is striking that Africa is the only continent not on track to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by 2015.

Sustainable development thrives best in an environment of good governance, peace and security. Yet, armed conflicts remain a major obstacle to development in several parts of the continent. Apart from their costs in human and material terms, conflicts impede production, damage infrastructure, prevent the reliable delivery of social services and disrupt societies. The maintenance of an environment of peace and security is therefore one of Africa's foremost development imperatives. Moreover, notwithstanding the long-standing commitments and repeated emphasis by African leaders, the process of regional integration – a major challenge for the continent in the context of rapid globalisation -- has been slow.

It is therefore by no coincidence that the Africa Chapter of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the WSSD states in its preamble that, since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), sustainable development has remained elusive for many African countries, with poverty persisting as a major challenge.

The purpose of this draft "Africa's Consensus Agenda" is to highlight Africa's priority issues and consensual policy options to be carried forward at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15). This paper benefited from intergovernmental consultations carried out in the framework of the African Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) for CSD14/15, and took cognizance of recent policy decisions adopted by African Leaders during the 2006-2007 period, on the cluster of issues to be addressed by the CSD-14/15, namely: energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air/atmospheric pollution and climate change. These include decisions adopted by the following high-level policy meetings:

- Eight Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, January 2007;
- Seventeenth Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry, June 2006;
- First Conference of African Union Ministers in charge of Electrical Energy, March 2006;
- First African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Hydrocarbons (Oil and Gas), December 2006;
- Conference of African Ministers in charge of Water and Energy, March 2006; and
- Other sub-regional and regional High-level meetings on the themes of the CSD14/15.

## II. Overview of Issues of Importance for Africa

### 1. Energy for sustainable development

The energy sector is undergoing a crisis in a large number of countries in Africa. The sector is characterized by low technical, economical and environmental performance due to a bundle of challenges, all urgent, that must be addressed in order for the continent to break the cycle of energy poverty, and make progress towards sustainable development. The RIM identified the following issues as **priority** and requiring concerted efforts by all actors, including the African decision-makers and international partners:

- ***Boosting energy production:*** Energy supply and services are critically limited by low production of modern energy. This is mostly due to: a prolonged unavailability of investment capital for large energy projects, especially those using renewable energy resources (such as hydropower plants), from public and private sources; low technical capacities in countries for project development; and generally inadequate science and technology capacities for the design of innovative indigenous energy solutions.
- ***Significantly scaling-up energy access and consumption, especially in rural area:*** The issue of providing sustainable energy in rural areas and to poor in peri-urban areas must be highlighted. New approaches in promoting diversification of energy resources -- including modern biomass, decentralized energy generation systems, off-grid schemes, utilization of energy for wealth creation, and innovative financial and energy delivery mechanisms based on a bottom-up approach -- should be supported.
- ***Increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix:*** Improving the electricity generation resource mix is a predominant challenge for sustainable development. Lack of investments, inadequate policy framework and low technical capacities are, among numerous other causes, responsible for the low level of development of Africa's relatively important renewable resources.
- ***Making the bioenergy sector sustainable:*** Solid biomass, mostly wood, constitutes the dominant energy source for African households and is, in general, traditionally used in an unsustainable manner that poses much threat to human health and the environment. Liquid biofuels (ethanol and bio-diesel) are rapidly emerging as strategic resources with much potential in Africa, but are yet to be assessed and harnessed. Strategies at national and regional levels and means are required to develop this sector and make it sustainable.
- ***Accelerating energy regional integration:*** Despite relatively abundant endowment at regional level, many African countries suffer from scarce energy resources and generation, and must pay high prices to import energy. This highlights the need for energy security through the development, at a faster rate, of intra-regional energy transport networks such as Oil and Gas pipelines and sub-regional cross-border electricity transmission infrastructure in order to boost energy trade in Africa.

Regional integration bodies and initiatives such as NEPAD<sup>1</sup>, REC<sup>2</sup>s, and the AUC<sup>3</sup> must be strengthened.

- ***Reducing energy waste through efficient generation and usage:*** It is safe to say that around 30% to 40% more electricity can be made available to Africans through a variety of energy efficiency measures, in sectors ranging from buildings, power generation and transmission, to industries. More considerable efforts need to be devoted to developing and implementing the needed energy efficiency measures.

## 2. **Industrial Development**

Africa lags behind other developing regions in almost all industry related indices. In most countries the dollar value of manufacturing value added (MVA) per population has been stagnant over the past three decades or has even declined. Africa's share of world manufacturing output also declined slightly over the two decades. Hence, the following issues emerge as priorities:

- ***Improving industrial productivity:*** This can be achieved through strategies focusing on structural issues such as technology and innovation systems, domestic capacity building, strengthening of domestic factor markets, and supply of public goods.
- ***Increasing performance of Industries*** by exposing firms to international competition, increasing domestic competition, improving access to new technologies and investment in human capital.
- ***Encouraging greater investment***, particularly private domestic investment and FDI, by addressing a host of constraints, including high investor risk, high taxes and tariffs on investment goods, corruption, macro-economic instability, and over-valued exchange rates.
- ***Initiating a shift from current production processes*** to less highly polluting, resource-wasting industries and production processes. This requires investment in new and more efficient technologies that save on inputs and generate less waste along the life cycle of a product, improving awareness of environmental issues and cleaner production processes, and putting in place an appropriate incentive structure.
- ***Building technological capabilities and innovative systems to sustain diversified industrial solutions that generate wealth and economic growth.***

## 3. **Climate change**

On the issue of Climate Change, the Africa region highlighted the need for all countries -- African and non-African -- to implement their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol. It particularly viewed the following as priorities:

- ***Strengthening and increasing climate and related policy research*** to promote effective knowledge networking to inform policy and program development in response to climate change related challenges identified by the UNFCCC;

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<sup>1</sup> NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development

<sup>2</sup> REC: Regional Economic Community

<sup>3</sup> AUC: African Union Commission

- *Increasing African countries' access* to the funds and benefit from the Kyoto Mechanisms and Marrakech Funds by improving technical and institutional capabilities;
- *Supporting and accelerating the development and implementation* of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs);
- *Building scientific human and institutional capacities* and developing international cooperation to deal with different aspects of climate change, including issues of adaptation at national and local levels where the vulnerabilities are most pronounced.

#### **4. Air pollution/Atmosphere**

On the issue of air/atmosphere pollution, the Africa region emphasizes the need to:

- *Adopt in all countries energy efficiency policies, strategies and practices*;
- *Promote micro-finance institutions* to fund cleaner energies and technologies for households and small businesses;
- *Promote and adopt an integrated and regional approach* in addressing air pollution and atmospheric issues;
- *Develop strategies to increase and retain research capacity, skills and infrastructure* in the area of air and atmospheric pollution;
- *Significantly scale up best practices* and tested air pollution reduction and mitigation options in all sectors; and
- *Scale up data collection and observation capacities* and increase activities in these areas.

### **III. Proposal for Policy Options and Strategies at regional Level**

The African Region underscores the importance of regional integration as the main strategic approach and recognizes the political leadership of the African Union structures and, in particular, the pivotal role of the NEPAD Programme of the African Union as the framework for achieving most regional objectives.

Accordingly, proposed policy options and strategies for the Africa Region are as follows:

#### **1. On the energy sector:**

- Design and implement energy access scale-up mechanisms in rural and urban areas using energy supply schemes that promote the development of productive and income-generating activities aimed at reducing poverty, enhancing local entrepreneurship, increasing energy consumption capabilities, and advancing the utilization of indigenous energy resources.
- Enhance the capacities of institutions related to bioenergy (liquid and solid biofuel) development for biomass statistics and planning in support of policies promoting adequate and affordable bioenergy services and resources aimed primarily at poverty reduction and national energy security.

- Provide needed resources and capacities to Regional Economic Communities for the harmonization of national policies to promote regional energy trade, and implement programmes aimed at reducing energy poverty and enhancing energy security at national levels.
- Support the establishment of flexible and accelerated investment schemes for the development of priority energy and industrial projects such as hydropower systems, and the development of technical capacities needed for the design, implementation and monitoring of these projects.

## **2. On Industrial Development:**

- Facilitate significantly greater access to finance and technology transfer and acquisition, build capacity for growth-oriented and competitive micro and small-scale enterprises (MSMEs) development, and increase empowerment of women resulting in the establishment of agro-processing and MSMEs to foster rural development.
- Strengthen technological capacities, metrology, standards, certification, testing and quality assurance institutions in all countries.
- Develop industrial environmental policy, regulation and guidelines including the adoption of corporate social responsibility codes in all countries.
- Address inadequacies in physical infrastructure and eliminate constraints that weigh upon the industrial offer, and ensure respect for established technical standards.
- Establish national industrial information networks, build capacity on information technology and promote linkages between R&D institutions and industries;

## **3. On Climate Change:**

- Increase the capabilities of countries to carry out assessments of the impacts of Climate Change, prepare NAPAs to cope with extreme climatic events, and support governments and private sectors to design carbon related projects.
- Develop and increase innovative technologies, processes and products such as drought resistant crops, crop diversification, improved farming technologies, water conservation and harvesting technologies, use of efficient non-polluting energy sources and mosquito nets for malaria control, to cope with and adapt to the challenges brought about by climate variability and climate change.
- Enhance and promote policy coherence and integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation concerns into priority development policies and programmes including PRSPs, so as to tackle climate change in an integrated manner.
- Establish climate forums to enhance regional cooperation on climate and early warning and improved information sharing to reduce/manage climate-related risk on farming and other sectors that are vulnerable to climate variability and change within the region.

#### 4. On Air pollution/Atmosphere:

- Establish and foster regional networks of scientists and institutions dealing with air and atmospheric pollution in developing countries through initiatives such as the international project on the System for Analysis, Research and Training (START), Air Pollution Information for Africa (APINA), etc.
- Implement the International Geosphere Biosphere Programme (IGBP) and establish a Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) station for sub-Saharan Africa to provide measurements for long-term accounting of green house gases and aerosols and the complex atmospheric chemical reactions which determine the depletion, transformation, lifetimes and transport of these gases and particles that contribute to climate change.
- Develop air pollution data collection and observation capability in all African countries.
- Promote the penetration of improved wood fuel stoves and cleaner energy resources for cooking and heating.

#### IV. Crosscutting Issues

Recognizing the critical need for additional financial and human resources and the importance of partnership, the African RIM underscored the **urgency for the mobilization of adequate resources, both internally and externally, and for strengthening of partnerships** for the implementation of programmes and projects on energy, industrial development, atmosphere/air pollution and climate change.

**The low level of public and private investment**, including FDI, and inadequate access to adequate finance is a major barrier to the implementation of commitments made in all sectors. Effective bilateral, multilateral and public-private partnerships are yet to be developed to address this constraint.

Another major crosscutting issue is the **need for adequate policy, legal and institutional frameworks**, as well as the requirement for a more **affirmed political will** to support the implementation of commitments.

Finally, Africa's low capacity to develop and implement innovative solutions to its problems is mainly due to its **inadequate science and technology human and institutional capacities**, including low number of scientists and technologists, decaying university and research facilities, and the absence of national innovation systems.