

**UN Support to Climate-Related Actions at the Regional Level
Issue Paper by the Cluster on Environment, Population and Urbanization
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I. Introduction

This paper was requested from cluster 4 as a response to the directive from the Chief Executive Board (CEB) to the effect that regional climate change responses should be coordinated by Regional Economic Commissions. The vehicle for this coordination in Africa is the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) working under the auspices of UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). It is also in response to the recommendations from the 9th RCM requesting environment, population and urbanisation cluster to support the RCM in developing a work plan for climate related activities. This document highlights the framework of engagement of UN agencies in Africa in tackling climate change under the policy guidance provided by the NEPAD Environment Action plan, AU summit decisions, AMCEN (Specialised Technical Committee) decisions on Climate Change and how the UN system has cooperated and the way forward.

In addition to traditional individual efforts, UN agencies in Africa have cooperated in tackling climate change, a crosscutting issue. There is a drive to increase joint projects and collaborative efforts in support of the African Union (AU) and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

II. How we organize ourselves in the framework of AU and NEPAD

Two initiatives of AU/NEPAD developed under the auspicious of AMCEN have provided guidance for a coordinated UN regional response on climate change in Africa;

- NEPAD Environment Action Plan, adopted in Maputo in 2003 by the AU summit identified climate change as key challenge for the continent and provided priority areas for actions.
- African Common Position on Climate Change; The 12th Ordinary Session of AMCEN held in 2008 in Johannesburg South Africa, adopted a decision to develop a common African position on climate change. This was subsequently endorsed by the African Union Summit in January 2009 and led to the AMCEN Special Session on climate change held in Nairobi in May 2009. The outcome of the special session was presented by the AUC and adopted by the AU Summit held in Sirte in July 2009. The outcome will also be used as a framework for engagement by the newly established Conference of African Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) spearheading the continent's delegation to the Copenhagen climate

summit. The 12th Ordinary Session of AMCEN specifically endorsed the Climate Information for Development (CLIMDEV) and the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), key initiatives of the partnership between UN-ECA, AfDB and AU in the context of developing a Comprehensive Framework for African Climate Change Programmes.

Already, agencies are working together on climate change and also implicitly following a division of labour based on the comparative advantages of each agency for example, UN-Habitat has launched the Cities in Climate Change Initiative, designed to support local action. UNEP has promoted inter-agency support to African negotiators in the ongoing climate change negotiations WMO provides support in developing and maintaining the WMO Quality Management Framework for meteorological, hydrological, marine and related environmental data products and services, IOM and UNEP are collaborating to address climate change, induced migration and the impact of population movement on environment. There is a growing list of partnerships by UN Agencies in support of NEPAD/AU programmes. UNESCO/UNEP on Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities Partnership Programme (MESA), WHO/UNEP on health and environment/ climate change, UNEP/UNDP on mainstreaming climate change into national development frameworks, UN-Habitat/UNFPA led inter-agency collaboration in the production of the state of African Cities Report and the State of African Population Report 2008 respectively. These initiatives point the direction to a coherent UN system approach in support to a comprehensive climate change policy and programmes in Africa.

III Major Achievements

▪ African Common Position on Climate Change

A good example of concerted UN engagement in the climate change agenda was their presence at the AMCEN special session in May 2009 in Nairobi to help in bringing about a common position of Africa on climate change. Inter-agency collaboration has facilitated the development of sub-regional climate projects and plans which were brought together at the continental level in the process of preparing the African common position on climate change. UNEP, UNECA and AfDB have continuously provided support to the African negotiating team in the ongoing climate change negotiations. A good example of concerted effort of UN engagement in the Climate Change Agenda was illustrated during the AMCEN Special Session attended by participants from UNECA, UNESCO, UNDP, WHO, WMO, UNFPA, UNEP, WFP, and IOM. UN agencies made substantial inputs towards the AMCEN push for an African Common Position on climate change.

• ClimDev-Africa

As reported in the 9th RCM, the African Union Commission (AUC), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) developed and are implementing a major programme on climate change and development for Africa (ClimDev-Africa). ClimDev-Africa aims to

enhance economic growth and progress towards the MDGs through mainstreaming climate risk management in sensitive sectors, mitigating the vagaries of climate variability and climate change, and to ensure that development achievements already gained are climate resilient in the longer term. This fits with all national poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) in Africa oriented towards the MDGs. ClimDev-Africa seeks to enhance response to climate change in Africa through: (i) Building on solid science and observational infrastructure, (ii) Enabling strong working partnerships between government institutions, private sector, civil society and vulnerable communities; and (iii) Creating and strengthening knowledge frameworks to support and integrate the actions required. In this regard, the Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) has been created as the policy arm. Hosted by the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Centre aims to deliver on the ClimDev-Africa Policy Component and play the role of overall Programme Executing Agency.

IV Lessons learnt and the way forward

Lessons learnt

Inter-agency cooperation has been a very effective way of tackling climate change in Africa. However, there is a lack of funding to bring policy and capacity-building activities to scale. Mechanisms are not yet available to facilitate joint resource mobilization or joint budgetary contributions. As sector-specific programmes develop, there is a need for vigilance to build in and maintain synergies, avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication of efforts, foster collaboration and take a team approach to resource mobilization across the system. The latter (ensuring adequate flows to cover a holistic approach across the system) is particularly difficult where there is a tradition of institutional competition, and perhaps needs occasional initiatives from the CEB.

The way forward

Strengthening support to Africa on Climate Change

- UN support to the development of the Comprehensive Framework of African Climate Change Programmes.
- Support NEPAD initiative in Mapping of regional actors/ institutions working on Climate Change and in the establishment and maintenance of a database of programmes
- Support the implementation of AU/NEPAD climate change initiatives including CLIMDEV, African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD), Great Green Wall and others
- Support strengthening the capacity of AU/NEPAD Secretariat to facilitate coordination of regional climate change initiatives, in keeping with the Environment Action Plan Capacity Building Strategy and 10 year Capacity Building Programme

- Mainstreaming climate change into the work of the clusters .The climate proofing of all UN programmes and coordination among climate change initiatives will be a component of this strategy. Agencies are urged to provide inputs on how this should be structured.
- Joint programming and joint resource mobilization

III. Conclusion

In tackling climate change, UN agencies in Africa have collaborated in the framework of AMCEN and in collaboration with the AU Commission and NEPAD Secretariat. Cooperation amongst UN agencies in support to the African Union has helped in developing a continental common position in climate change negotiations and to launch the ClimDev-Africa programme. Yet, difficulties exist in mobilizing resources to support UN joint projects. New mechanisms of resource mobilization should be elaborated to facilitate the UN delivery as one at regional level. The climate proofing of all sectors through the respective UN inter-agency clusters and combinations of lead agencies should go a long way towards development of coherent support to the AU and its NEPAD programme, and towards effective partnership with these African entities.

Contributions from other clusters are required to develop and finalise the comprehensive RCM Strategy and Business Plan on Climate Change.