

Africa Region Workshop for the Implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement:

14 to 16 May 2024:

Rainbow Hotel, Victoria Falls. Zimbabwe

Prof. Prosper Matondi: Permanent Secretary for Environment, Climate and Wildlife Zimbabwe

Dr Alick Muvundika: Interim Chair of the African Group of Negotiators

El Hadji Mbaye Diagne: Africa Group of Negotiators Article 6 Lead Negotiator and Member of the Article 6.4 Supervisory Body

Mr Tirivanhu Muhwati: Member of the Article 6.4 Supervisory Bodies

Article 6 focal persons representing member states here present

Distinguished colleagues and partners, all protocols observed

First, allow me to extend the UNECA's gratitude to the Government of Zimbabwe for hosting this workshop, and to the African Group of Negotiators for co-convening the workshop. We are also grateful to the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa for generously supporting this workshop.

Dear colleagues, the world is paying a high price for the long delays in addressing global warming despite decades of warnings. Despite contributing the least to global warming, Africa is paying the highest price due to its historical and structural vulnerabilities. In 2022, worldwide energy-related carbon dioxide emissions exceeded 36 billion tons, setting a new record as the global economy recovered from the pandemic. According to the International Energy Agency, total energy-related CO₂ emissions increased by 1.1% (410 million tonnes) in 2023. Far from falling rapidly - as is required to meet the global climate goals set out in the Paris Agreement - CO₂ emissions reached a new record high of 37.4 Gt in 2023.

The landscape of emissions continues to change. For example, developing countries in Asia now account for around half of global emissions, up from around two-fifths in 2015 and around one-quarter in 2000. However, advanced economies continue to have relatively high per capita emissions, at about 70% higher than the global average in 2023. Despite pledges towards net zero, the essential problems remain:

- The world has emitted too much already;
- We haven't done nearly enough to shift toward cleaner ways of running our economies;
- And we still don't have available and affordable ways of fixing certain high emitting industries and products, like aviation, maritime shipping, fertilizers, cement, and steel.

According to the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in 2022, as emissions continue to rise, the levels of greenhouse gas the world can still release before pushing the planet past very dangerous warming thresholds has become alarmingly tight. This means that cutting emissions alone almost certainly won't be enough to meet the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement. It is now nearly impossible to prevent 1.5 °C of global warming without substantial efforts to remove carbon. Carbon removal is non-optional. The world will therefore need to create the infrastructure, systems, and policies required to suck billions of tons of carbon dioxide out of the air annually. Estimates suggest that by 2050, the world may need 5 to 16 billion metric tons of carbon removal annually, combining both natural and technological approaches.

Carbon removal complements emissions reduction efforts and is essential for addressing climate change. It involves a diverse portfolio of strategies, from nature-based solutions to innovative technologies. There are three main methods of carbon removal:

- planting trees, restoring forests and adopting similar land management practices,
- developing and deploying carbon-sucking machines, and
- relying on plants to produce energy while capturing the emissions, which is referred to as bioenergy with carbon capture and sequestration (BECCS).

Different approaches to carbon removal have very different benefits and challenges. Nature-based approaches like planting trees and restoring forests, for instance, are the most widely deployed today. But the carbon can go right back into the atmosphere when the plants die or burn up in fires. So these solutions are likely shorter-lived than other methods like geological storage, which locks carbon away underground.

Achieving high levels of carbon removal is going to take significant research and development to determine the most effective methods, minimize environmental impacts, and rapidly develop major projects in the real world.

This is where Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and carbon markets become important. Carbon markets incentivize climate action by enabling parties to trade *carbon credits* generated by the reduction or removal of Greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as by switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy or enhancing or conserving carbon stocks in ecosystems such as a forest. It is estimated that trading in carbon credits could reduce the cost of implementing countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by more than half – by as much as \$250 billion in 2030. In other words, carbon trading could facilitate the removal of 50% more emissions (about 5 gigatons of carbon dioxide per year by 2030) at no additional cost. Over time, markets are expected to become redundant as every country gets to net zero emissions and the need to trade emissions diminishes.

Article 6 of the Paris Agreement allows countries to voluntarily cooperate with each other to achieve emission reduction targets set out in their NDCs. Under Article 6, a country (or countries) will be able to transfer carbon credits earned from the reduction of GHG emissions to help one or more countries meet climate targets. However, there are still many issues that remain unresolved in terms of operationalizing Article 6, including the creation of policy and regulatory mechanisms to guide the implementation of Article 6 in Africa.

This workshop therefore comes at a very opportune time when Africa is seeking to take advantage of the provisions of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement to promote emissions mitigation outcomes, with development co-benefits which could include investments in clean energy technologies, restoration of degraded ecosystems, and enhanced community livelihoods, among others. The objectives of the workshop, to enhance the capacities of African states to effectively domesticate Article 6, as well as to improve the capacity of the African Group of Article 6 Negotiators and experts, and sharing of experiences among countries will go a long way towards contributing enabling the implementation of carbon markets in ways that are aligned with the Goals of the Article 6.

UNECA will continue to work with African member states, the AGN as well as other partners and stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of Article 6 produces positive mitigation outcomes as well as sustainable development co-benefits. I therefore wish you productive deliberations and look forward to the outcomes of this important workshop.

I thank you