

Marrakech offers warm welcome...

With SMART Agriculture, Africa can feed Africa

By Violet Mengo

The Fourth annual Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IV) opened here in Marrakech, Morocco yesterday with a strong focus on how the continent can feed itself.

Addressing the opening ceremony, the Director, Special Initiatives Division of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Ms. Fatima Denton, told participants that to date agriculture had not served as a transformational hub in fuelling economic growth and propelling industrialization.

Denton said that pre-industrial agricultural in the developed world had largely been predicated on three variables: climate, culture, and the deployment of smart technologies.

“With agricultural transformation, came migration and industrialization, which enabled countries such as Britain to increase both population growth and improving living standards. No industrialized country has achieved sustainable economic growth without a solid agricultural foundation,” said Ms. Denton.

She pointed out that the focus of CCDA-IV was driven by the need to ensure that agriculture was embedded into a ‘solution space’ that would serve not only a risk amplifier but also an opportunity to shift the current modes of production into a viable entrepreneurial activity.

Ms. Denton said climate change remained a double-edged sword and constituted the greatest challenge of our times. “It is also Africa’s greatest opportunity to widen our ripples of prosperity across our continent”, she insisted, adding that Africa was already defying the rest of world and showing great potential in terms of its macroeco-



nomie growth.

The continent was well poised, asserted the ECA official, to use its resources towards achieving structural transformation and severing ties with poverty for good.

“A two-degree warming will make a mockery of all our efforts to combat poverty, and instead of embalming our stride towards sustainable develop-

ment, it will reduce the scope we have to make poverty a thing of the past”, she said.

Africa was one of the few regions where hunger and undernourishment continued to claim lives and rob productive sectors of their most basic tools – healthy women and men able to replenish their human and physical capital to stimulate growth in the agricultural sector.

Solidarity the key to opening Africa’s negotiation doors

By Busani Bafana

Solidarity in climate change negotiations will cement Africa’s chances of securing fair climate financing that will ensure a balance in adaptation and mitigation strategies for a food secure continent, a Moroccan government official has said.

The Minister Delegate for the Environment, Ms. Hakima El Haite, told delegates at official opening of CCDA-IV in Morocco that unity of purpose is critical to a strong and coherent African position in the global climate change negotiations. Unity, she said, was paramount if the continent was to transform the challenges of climate change into opportunities for growth by sharing information and networking.

“We should speak with one voice”, Ms. El Haite told delegates. “Our climate change negotiations should be transformed into a force that will bring change.”

Ms. El Haite shared with conference participants the story of how her North African nation has developed the Morocco Green Plan which has helped the country save scarce water resources. Morocco switched from using irrigation to drip systems as a way of adapting its agriculture production to a changing climate. Under the plan, Morocco has also developed more than 130 dams that support sustainable food production and sanitation programmes.

In the last four years Morocco has implemented a number of developments to help it fight climate change. The country instituted a study on recurrent drought to better implement saving strategies and to tackle other challenges related to land degradation which had triggered food insecurity and reduced productivity.

In addition, Morocco has also developed a Green Investment Fund which Ms. El Haite said could be a model for other African countries to follow. Morocco has pledged to help other African countries set up green investment plans that will help them to benefit from the global Green Climate Fund.

“If we are to meet the challenge of climate change we should bring down the barriers between our countries,” Haite said, adding: “Solidarity is key and we should negotiate as a continent. It is important that we set up a network to share best experiences and success stories on climate change in Africa.”

Africa Is Ready for Green Climate Fund

By Atayi Babs

Africa is fully prepared to receive funds to finance projects aimed at increasing climate resilience capacity on the continent, an official from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has said.

Addressing journalists on Day One of CCDA-IV in Marrakech, Morocco, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, the Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, declared that Africa is indeed ready for the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

This is coming on the heels of the views held in some quarters that Africa is yet to build the requisite capacity to attract funds from the GCF.

“In view of the fact that Africa is at the receiving end of problems of flood and drought, Africa is quite ready to benefit a lot from alternative development as well as chart the path that embraces green technology” declared Dr. Hamdok.

Reinforcing Africa’s capacity to equitably manage the GCF funds through institutional frameworks such as ClimDev-Africa at the African Development Bank, the ECA Deputy Executive Secretary believes that with Africa’s 55 countries, the \$100 billion pledge should be considered as the minimum.

The GCF represents a potential watershed



Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, ECA Deputy Executive Secretary

moment for climate finance in Africa. To date, the flows of climate finance of the continent have been inadequate in comparison to the continent’s needs.

Africa is widely acknowledged as the region

in the world most vulnerable to climate change, while its recent impressive economic growth has placed an increased focus on the resources required to ensure that emissions do not grow correspondingly.

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Can the new BRICS bank deliver Africa's climate adaptation finance?

Commentary

The unveiling of the much-anticipated BRICS bank – the New Development Bank (NDB) – at the Fortaleza Summit in July this year sparked considerable optimism across the developing world, which hailed it as precisely what the doctor ordered to challenge the West's traditional monopoly over international finance.

Former World President Joseph Stiglitz was among those who gave a thumbs-up to the NDB, asserting that it would “[add] to the flow of money that will go to finance infrastructure, adaptation to climate change – all the needs that are so evident in the poorest countries.”

What distinguishes the NDB from existing international financial institutions is that sustainable development features prominently on its agenda. On the face of it, this is no surprise, given the nature of the BRICS grouping. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa collectively account for 43% of the world's population, more than 20% of global gross domestic product, and 36% of global carbon emissions.

The grouping is home to some of the world's leading firms in the major green economy sectors. Its members are transforming their economies by investing in green technologies, promoting renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency and integrating sustainability into their core business practices. A case in point is China, which is leading the global renewable energy race. In 2012 alone, it invested US\$ 65.1 billion and added 23.1 GW of clean energy-generating capacity.

All this suggests that Africa has much to gain. Whilst contributing to only 3.6% of global carbon emissions, Africa suffers the most from the adverse impacts of climate change. Low levels of development, high food and energy insecurity, and lack of infrastructure further exacerbate the continent's vulnerability and limit its adaptive capacity.

UNEP's 'Adaptation Gap' study published last year puts Africa's annual cost for climate adaptation at US\$35 - 50 billion by 2050. Despite developed countries' pledges at the 2009 global climate negotiations to mobilize US\$ 30 billion for the period 2010-2012, less than US\$700 million has so

far been committed for Africa. Given the shortfall, the high expectations that greeted the birth of the NDB were entirely predictable.

Conceived at the Fifth BRICS Summit in Durban, South Africa in March 2013, the NDB offers Africa an opportunity to leapfrog from a carbon-intensive development model to a clean, climate-resilient and sustainable growth pathway. Beyond financing, the burgeoning relations between the BRICS and Africa will accelerate the adoption of green technologies on the continent.

Ties between Africa and the BRICS have flourished over the last decade, with trade forecasts of US\$500 billion by 2015. With South Africa joining the elite BRIC club in 2010 – hence the 'S' in BRICS – and as Africa's main commercial partner, the BRICS are positioned as natural allies to the continent's sustainable development efforts. The plan to open the first regional office of the new bank in South Africa is another boost to Africa's confidence in what appears to be the win-win relationship in the making. Or is it?

Many caution against rushing headlong into partnerships with the BRICS, advising that African countries should ponder over the grouping's relatively poor sustainable development track – especially in enforcing and complying with environmental and climate standards. They argue that because BRICS are still developing, the quest for economic growth often trumps climate and environmental considerations.

Another concern is that BRICS investments are directed primarily in Africa's extractive industries, the biggest culprits in terms of pollution. BRICS development projects are also considered to exclude local communities from the dividends of economic growth and entrench poverty even further.

Finally, and as has been seen in different iterations of the global climate negotiations, the BRICS don't necessarily act as a bloc but operate as individual countries that carve out their particular niches and protect their self-interest.

Proponents of this worldview urge that Africa should adopt a cautious stance and spread its risks, at least until the cooperation modalities are set out and codified into mutually beneficial agreements.

Still, the BRICS bank exists and will launch its operations in 2016 with an initial capitalization



of US\$100 billion. Whether it can quickly position itself to offer a viable alternative to existing institutions remains to be seen. After all, the African Development Bank (AfDB) is advancing its own ambitious agenda to become the premier financier of Africa's development. Earlier this year, it launched the Africa Climate Change Fund (ACCF), with an initial contribution of \$6 million from Germany, to help finance adaptation projects. The amount may be small when compared to the NDB's start-up endowment, but the intention to offer alternative financing options to Africa is clear.

For now, there is ample scope for Africa to influence and shape BRICS decisions on climate adaptation. But the continent has to first unpack the somewhat nebulous concept of sustainable development, set binding climate targets and establish strong institutions to manage climate programs and enforce climate regulations so as to deter offenders and free riders. If the BRICS can demonstrate real financial commitment to Africa's climate-resilient development agenda, then nothing stands in the way of a win-win partnership.

ACPC to host Africa's Climate Research Secretariat

By Aloysius Fomenky

Members of the Climate Research for Development (CR4D) initiative who began meeting in Morocco on Monday last night agreed a research collaboration platform on climate science on the continent and decided to set up a temporary secretariat that will be hosted by the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC).

They also decided to harmonise proposals tabled by ClimDev-Africa and those of the secretariat of the African Ministerial Council on Meteorology (AMCOMET) dealing on the creation of an advisory group that will lead the generation of scientific content by the new initiative.

Opening the meeting on Monday, Ms Denton called on participants to conscientiously promote what she called “utilitarian science” that would help Africa to take its full place on the world's development train.

“This laudable initiative should aim at science that gives the power to the people; science that would allow the sahelian farmers to make strategic choices; science that will strengthen the productive capabilities of research institutions in Africa; and science that enables Africa to rise above current challenges... she insisted.

She revealed that under the auspices of ClimDev-Africa programme, the African Climate Policy Centre is initiating a -1 Million Dollar capacity building programme to support the training

of young African scientists in all areas of climate change and development.

It would be recalled that for two days, participants reviewed priority activities identified at the Arusha Conference, sought new ways to advance climate science research frontiers in Africa-priorities, based on societal needs and identified climate research needs for policy and development in Africa.

At the closing session of the meeting last night Ms Denton again took the opportunity fired up African climate researchers and scientists in general to engage in research whose results improve lives.

The meeting was held under the aegis of the World Meteorological Organisation and ECA/Africa Climate Policy Centre “to devise an institutional platform for linking African climate science research and knowledge to inform adaptation decision-making in Africa.

Both the CR4D and CCDA-IV come in the wake of ever-increasing damaging predictions on climate risks for Africa by a recent UN-sponsored report which warns that although “African farmers have developed several adaptation options to cope with current climate variability, such adaptations may not be sufficient for future changes of climate.”

The immediate task of the secretariat will be to develop an election mechanism for the selection of members of the scientific committee.

Use climate information to create opportunities, Conference told

By Steve Nsamaza

Speakers at CCDA-IV have urged that policy makers make urgent use of the large amounts of data and knowledge on climate change that is already available.

Ms. Fatima Denton, Director at ECA and Coordinator for the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), told delegates the ongoing conference should devise means of keeping climate food insecurity at arms length and stimulate growth through the translation of climate information into practical action.

Ms. Denton called for innovative ideas to turn climate challenges into opportunities. “Our deepest conviction is that climate change remains a double-edged sword. It constitutes the greatest challenge of our times, but it is also Africa's greatest opportunity to widen out ripples of prosperity across our continent.”

Over the recent years, Africa's annual economic growth has been among the strongest in the world, but the benefits have yet to reach the continent's rural poor as they lack the means to counter

the negative effects of climate change.

The main focus now is on how to turn the sector that employs an estimated 70% of Africans to more productive purpose. “We must turn [agriculture] into a source of lucrative business rather than simply a subsistence way of life”, said Ms. Denton.

Experts point to the imminent expiry of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their replacement with new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and argue there is need for an increased sense of urgency amongst African leaders to be more assertive and effective in their search for a fair and equitable climate deal in 2015.

Some good news were also aired at the conference by the African Development Bank (AfDB) representative, Ms. Yacine Fal, announcing the ClimDev Special Fund that is now effective with 33 million euros and will shortly be launching a first call for proposals.

“For our part, we stand ready to support any and all actions that are bankable and fall within the remit of the African Development Bank mandate,” Ms. Fal told delegates.

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Climate change worsens conflicts in Africa

By Sellina Nkowan

Africa is among the most vulnerable continents to climate change and climate variability, a situation aggravated by the interaction of 'multiple stresses' occurring at various levels and low adaptive capacity, according to the Fifth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment report.

As a result, says Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the IPCC, such changes in climatic conditions aggravate conflicts, though it may not be the only factor.

Much as the debate on the linkage between climate change and conflicts on the continent rages on, the IPCC report suggests that a number of conflicts in Africa are exacerbated by resource constraints which have come about due to global

warming and climate change.

Dr. Pachauri argued that such climate related conflicts in Africa are due to the scramble for limited resources such as water and diminishing agricultural land.

The IPCC chair, who addressed delegates at the on-going CCDA-IV conference in Morocco via a video message, added that climate change can lead to conflicts because "people are in constant search of water and agricultural land thereby being bound to come into conflict with each other."

"Water stresses, declining of agricultural land and spread of pests and diseases stimulate conflicts. Added to this, poverty makes Africa susceptible to climate change effects," he said.

In 2007, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon described the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region as the world's first climate change conflict.



According to an article titled 'Does Climate Change Cause Conflicts?' By Mark Notaras of the United Nations University, the assumption was that water scarcity from changed rainfall patterns resulting from climate change contributed to conflict in Darfur.

African Development Fund to launch youth Agri-preneurship programme

By Friday Phiri

The African Development Bank (AfDB) will soon begin an initiative to provide young people with financial incentives to enter into agri-business, Ken Johm, Coordinator for Special Initiatives and Lead Agricultural Economist has told journalists at the ongoing CCDA-IV in Marrakech, Morocco.

The AfDB, said Mr. Johm, is aware of the limited involvement of young people in the agricultural sector, which is touted as the key pillar for the continent's economic development.

"We are launching a new agri-preneurship program to bring young entrepreneurs in the agriculture supply chains," he said. "We have realized that most youths are still shunning agriculture, hence our intervention to try and encourage them to see agriculture as a business."

Mr. Johm disclosed that apart from empowering the youth, the bank's new policy on agriculture between the year 2015 and 2019 will focus on innovations, irrigation and other strategies that will encourage growth of the agriculture sector amid the climate related challenges in Africa.

Johm believes irrigation is a crucial component given challenges related to climate change.

"Irrigation development is very important if there is going to be transformation of African agriculture," he said.

Currently, according to studies, only three to five percent of arable land in Africa is irrigated.

Statistics indicate that agriculture contributes close to 30 percent of the continent's GDP, and accounts for 50% of the total exports from the African continent. The sector further employs over 70% of the population in most non-oil economies. And yet Africa heavily relies on rainfall, which is highly vulnerable to climate change.

High Level Dialogue calls for research on smallholder farmers

By Violet Mengo

Senior policy makers taking part in Wednesday's High Level Dialogue at the opening of CCDA-IV have unanimously agreed that if Africa is to feed itself it must invest in research on smallholder farmers.

Barros Bacar Banjai, Guinea Bissau's Secretary of State of Environment and Tourism, said that smallholder farmers were in need of updated information on climate change that would enable them to better plan for their agriculture activities.

Most farmers in Africa, he argued, used outdated technology because they did not have information on major innovations in agriculture from around the world.

"With research targeted at small holder farmers, they will be guided on what to focus on regarding farming and what kinds of tools are relevant to their agricultural activities", Mr. Banjai said.

Senegal's Minister for Environment and Sus-

tainable Development, Abdoulaye Balde, said that in order for Africa to feed the world, there was need to manage the natural resources for development.

Policies to optimize natural resource management should be focused on ensuring that they bring development to the continent, unlike the current situation, said the Minister.

Moroccan Environment Minister Delegate Hakima El Haite, told the High Level Dialogue it was high time that Africa took a fresh look at agriculture to come up with innovative ways of improving the sector.

All agreed that Governments needed to work closely with the private sector harness funding and innovation that can help farmers modernize their agricultural methods and practices.

"There is need for a multi-sectoral approach to planning, which should be done in an integrated way and in a way we will be able to make progress in the agriculture sector," Ms. Haite said.



Interview

Mpanu Mpanu on designing the roadmap to Lima

By Busani Bafana

Priorities, participation, process, persuasion and bold ambition are buzzwords in the tool kit of nifty negotiators on the road to the 20th Conference of Parties (COP 20) in Lima, Peru.

Negotiator and former chair of the Africa Group (AGN), Mr. Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, told CCDA- Live that preparation is everything at a time Africa is looking for decisive action on climate change.

"A successful Lima COP will be a reflection of what will be expected in Paris, where COP 21 will be held," said Mr. Mpanu Mpanu, adding that "this can only succeed through establishing an inclusive and open process that ensures broad participation as possible".

There is need to push for a common target as a way forward for Africa. "Many people have lost faith in the process and it is important that a good inclusive process is [designed]".

From experience, Mr. Mpanu Mpanu noted that when countries fail to agree on common targets, small groupings with vested interests are usually formed, and such groups call the shots at the end of the day."

African negotiators, Mr. Mpanu Mpanu insists,



Mr. Tosi Mpanu Mpanu

have a duty to report and explain the negotiating processes to all stakeholders so that a common position detailing Africa's priorities is clear and understood.

"There is need to reach out to group of least developed countries and the small island states as these have a high degree of legitimacy when we come to negotiations," he says. "Substance is key as we need

a draft agreement when we go to Lima because of the legal obligation that by May 2016 the negotiation text is tabled and ready 6 months prior to COP21 and that we have prioritised which elements we want to resolve in Paris."

At the disposal of the climate change negotiators are the tools of scientific evidence of how Africa is

paying the price of emissions that is has not caused and the rule of law. Mr. Mpanu Mpanu bemoaned the application of soft law that does not impose punishment when some countries opt to disregard international agreements.

Moroccan Government Pledges to Support Climate Civil Society

Words and Picture By Atayi Babs

Following the successful launch of the Moroccan chapter of the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) at the sidelines of the ongoing Climate Change conference in Marrakech, the government of the Kingdom of Morocco has promised its support to the civil society.

While commending the organization for its extensive advocacy on climate justice for Africa, the Minister Delegate to the Minister of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment, Morocco, H.E Ms. Hakima El Haite, pledged the support of the Moroccan government towards ensuring effective collaboration with civil society using the credible platform already provided by the new PACJA chapter.

Sam Ogallah of the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) conveyed his appreciation for the support of the Moroccan Government and called for greater collaboration with governments in North Africa as the march towards a new global treaty beckons in Paris.

The PACJA Coordinator for North Africa who doubles as the head of the Moroccan Chapter, Said Chakri, pledged to deploy the network's extensive contacts in driving the attainment of climate justice objectives across the region.



View from the Newsroom

Africa Plots Strategies to Feed Itself

By Aaron Yancho Kaah

Failing to prepare is preparing to fail: This is the message that has caused the ongoing Marrakech conference under the theme African can feed African now: Translating climate knowledge in to action to assert Africa's pragmatic and prudent determination to fight poverty and hunger on the continent.

This conference comes as the African Development Bank (AfDB) celebrates its 50th anniversary, and at the time when the ClimDev-Africa partnership has established a special fund to promote sound and viable climate change adaptation strategies on the continent.

The conference also comes at a time after African leaders had mapped a way forward to improve agricultural productivity through transforming agriculture to create jobs and a viable food security bank on the continent in a recent forum in Malawi.

Such is the task the ClimDev Special Funds will now take up to ensure that through strategic adaptation policies the continent can move through the value chain from subsistence to commercial agriculture.

To further cushion the impact of climate change, another initiative aimed at supporting disaster risk reduction on the continent has been formed to give future hope since climate change is likely going to multiply risks.

The disaster risk reduction schemes under the climate policy centers will work to predict the impact of climate change and to assist the local farmers to use climate information for their own development and benefits.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), adaptation is a participatory process, and the international community must work hand in glove with Africa to continuously realize these goals.

We must do more than increase agriculture productivity - Experts

By Kofi Adu Domfeh

Africa's capacity to feed itself now and in the future remains a major challenge, despite its enormous agricultural potentials to produce enough food for the continent and the rest of the world.

According to Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), transforming agriculture into a more dynamic commercial-oriented sector will improve productivity, create jobs, generate income and enhance livelihoods.

"Increasing agricultural productivity alone is not sufficient enough to ensure food security," he

observed. "Agriculture must gradually transition from subsistence to agriculture as a business in order to achieve the objective of ending hunger and alleviating poverty."

To achieve the set objective, he recommends more value addition, agro-processing and agribusiness as well as improved access to markets.

"Limited access to markets, both at local and regional level perpetuates poverty and food deficiency whereas improved infrastructure would not only open up access to markets but also help address challenges of climate change and facilitating movement of food from areas of surplus to those due with impacts of climate change," noted Mr. Hamdok.

Agriculture remains the single most important

sector in many African economies, accounting for at least 30% of national incomes and forming the bulk of export earnings. But the continent continues to spend colossal amounts of money annually – between \$40-\$50 billion – importing agricultural products, in spite of enormous resource endowment, unutilized arable land, fresh water resources and human capital to produce sufficiently.

Mr. Hamdok wants scientific and technological interventions and innovations to be efficiently harnessed to transform the agricultural sector.

"The availability of reliable and sufficient energy to drive this transformation process is critical across the entire agricultural value chain," he stated.



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