



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa



# Contributing to the Talanoa Dialogue: The African Climate Talks II

**March 22-23, 2018**

**Intercontinental Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Draft Report**

## Introduction

“One key outcome of the conference (COP 23) is the Talanoa Dialogue. Talanoa is a Fiji term for a conversation in which the people involved share ideas and resolve problems. As the sum total of the current climate targets under the Paris Agreement is not yet sufficient for limiting global warming to well below two degrees Celsius, agreement was reached in Paris that the international community would have to raise the level of ambition over time. The Talanoa Dialogue is the trial run for this ambition mechanism.”

The world’s governments reached the Paris Agreement in 2015 at COP 21. The agreement commits to specific targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Paris Agreement has been hailed as a breakthrough moment in the trajectory of the UNFCCC framework, capping emissions not more than 20C since the 19th century onset of the industrial revolution. While 2 degrees warming has been considered the upper limit of ‘safe’ warming, the Paris Accord further seeks, if possible, to aim for even lower warming target of 1.5 degrees. The 20C target is itself a political limit, with scientific debates still raging over its implications for the various regions (e.g. IPCC Special report. The main mechanism by which nations commit towards achieving the objectives of the Accord are the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)).

To facilitate the foregoing discourse, the ACPC in collaboration with Addis Ababa University convened the second round of the African Climate Talks (ACT!) at the Intercontinental Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 22-23rd March 2018. The event attended by more than 170 participants was a follow-up to the inaugural ACT event which took place in September 2015 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

## Objectives

### Overall objective

This African Climate Talks proposed to introduce a critical dimension to the Talanoa dialogue by interrogating contextual questions which are typically silent in the UNFCCC process. In this broad context, the ACTS teased out debates over a range of issues that affect the implementation of the NDCs in Africa, and created a space for the identification of alternative pathways to the resolution of the climate (and development) crises facing the continent.

### Specific objectives – Key issues

Key issues discussed:

1. The climate crisis
  - Causes and solutions (Is the Paris Agreement an adequate framework to address the climate crisis?)
  - Climate change impacts on development in Africa
2. Industrialization and leapfrogging, how realistic:
  - Fossil fuel reserves in Africa
  - Energy debts and investments, stranded assets
  - Energy security and self sufficiency
  - Innovation and technology
3. Climate change and key economic sectors in Africa
4. Climate change and emerging human and environmental insecurities
5. Climate Change as a constraint and as an opportunity

- Commercialization of climate
- Market based mechanisms and Carbon profiteering
- State and markets in climate change

## Expected outputs/outcome

- Broadening of the climate change debate to include critical linkages between climate change and the underlying economic and political dynamics.
- Contribution to a more comprehensive climate response strategy which urgently addresses the African condition.
- Emergence of a critical African epistemological community on climate change and development.

## Targeted audience

African researchers, policy and decision makers and practitioners in the climate change and development community.

## The Keynote Speech

The keynote address was made by former Group of 77 and China Chairman, Ambassador Lumumba Di-Aping of South Sudan. He averred that Africa needs stronger climate institutions if the continent is to successfully combat climate change.

In the keynote presentation to experts attending event, Ambassador Di-Aping said; “We must recognize that without strong measures, the strong action required to combat climate change will not be taken, with Africa bearing the losses and damage”.

He said the continent needs to establish the position of a Commissioner for Climate Change at the African Union Commission with the critical mission of addressing the existential threat of climate change.

“We do not have an AU Commissioner for Climate Change. This is clearly an omission given that almost every other aspect of the AU’s mission is dependent on stabilizing the climate within which Africa exists,” the Ambassador said, adding that building the knowledge and infrastructure within the AU system to support effective action on climate change and ‘to support our political processes including Heads of State (CAHOSCC), Ministers (AMCEN) and our technical negotiators’ was crucial.

“It is notable that there is no permanent secretariat supporting the African Group, and that we shamefully remain reliant on foreign donors for much of the support to our technical experts,” he added to applause from experts gathered to discuss climate change impacts on development in Africa, the continent’s position on climate agreements such as the 2015 Paris Agreement and related topics.

Some of the key issues being discussed in the talks include the causes and solutions to the climate crisis with participants asking if the Paris Accord is an adequate framework to address the climate crisis.

Climate change impacts on development in Africa is also being discussed with participants agreeing on the need for a more effective framework from 2025 onwards, one that is consistent with Africa’s survival and prosperity:

“We must recognize that the current Paris architecture is fundamentally flawed, inadequate and will remain and serves as the new and main basis for multilateral cooperation during the first period of commitments -2020- 2025-2030,” said Ambassador Di-Aping.

“The African continent in this new architecture is tragically weaker than even before. And having cheered, applauded and celebrated this new 4-degree Celsius catastrophe it is stuck in a rut. The only way forward is reinventing it in a way consistent with science and Africa’s survival and in solidarity with the global south, global poor and the progressive democratic centre and metropolis.”

## Future

Africa, he said, must recognize that it faces an existential crisis that it cannot solve alone.

“Our survival is at stake. We must convince or find ways to pressure or coerce other countries into doing their fair share,” the Ambassador said.

He continued: “We need stronger science from an African perspective. We must not simply follow science put together by other countries, or funded by them through multilateral institutions. We need an African Climate Science Working Group – an African IPCC led by and for Africans.”

He said Africa must find ways to exert greater pressure on all countries to achieve the 1.5 and 2-degree Celsius goals.

“If these goals are necessary preconditions for our well-being, we must ask whether each country who wishes to trade or invest in Africa is doing its fair share of the climate task,” said Ambassador Di-Aping, adding Africa also needs to strengthen South-South Cooperation on climate change.

He concluded by saying that Africa’s efforts to combat climate change and develop the continent must be based on self-empowerment and self-reform.

## Summary of the Discussions

Africa should focus more on building internal solutions to its problems rather than depend on international partners to solve its challenges.

This was the dominant message at the end of the two-day meeting on the Talanoa Dialogue: African Climate Talks II (ACT!-II) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Participants at the talks on the theme; “Market policy versus market mechanisms in the implementation of the Paris Agreement”, called for African initiatives to address the continent’s climate problems.

They advocated for holistic African approaches to help the region in its climate change mitigation, adaptation and in addressing its exposure and vulnerability to constantly increasing climate impacts.

Mr. James Murombedzi, Officer in Charge of Africa Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), underscored that Africa continues to have the least capacity for Climate Information Services (CIS), a concern that the Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa (WISER) programme is addressing.

“WISER seeks to demonstrate the socio-economic benefits (SEB) of investing in CIS. Apart from investing in CIS, we should also build the capacity of decision makers to be able to analyse and integrate CIS in policy,” Mr. Murombedzi said.

He added that WISER was also supporting development of climate research for development (CR4D) for CIS to be fully integrated in policy making.

Mr. Linus Mofor of the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) spoke about the African Climate Resilient Investment Facility (AFRI-RES).

He revealed that findings by the programme indicated a huge deficit in infrastructure on the continent, a big barrier to growth and development.

“Infrastructure is an enabler and catalyst for industrialisation, trade and regional integration. It should be done in a way that addresses potential threats from climate change. Africa should seize the opportunity to do it right and lead,” Mr. Mofor said.

He further noted that Africa needs hundreds of billions of dollars to invest in infrastructure, and that it's imperative to climate proof the investments.

Mr. Godwell Nhamo of University of South Africa called on African countries to work together and address the financing deficit, instead of relying on foreign donors.

“Let Africa engage, among its nations, to mainstream climate change in their budgets and focus on adaptation. We can address this locally but not by roving the world and asking for money from donors,” said Mr. Nhamo.

Mr. David Lessole of the University of Botswana noted that political leadership was crucial to guide the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI), the Talanoa Dialogue and beyond.

“We should focus on outcomes - livelihoods, sustainability, vulnerability, human security - instead of the traditional sectors like health and agriculture,” said Mr. Lessole.

He called on the African Development Bank (AfDB) to review its rules on funding mechanism to make it easy for countries to get money on time for their projects instead of what he said was its cumbersome regime of accessing money.

“We need to nominate a commissioner to the African Union dedicated to climate change. A commissioner who will head our initiative to develop a climate change implementation mechanism,” Lessole said.

Ms. Pauline Dube of the University of Botswana pointed out that policymakers need to link the continent's social systems-local, regional and international for resource mobilisation to have a greater impact on climate change.

“Relying on others is creating inequalities even at the village level. Anthropocene is characterised by dominance of people over others. We have been the victims of this but even those who created it are suffering. Let us have our own solutions,” she said.

Mr. Joseph Matowanyika of Chinhoyi University, Zimbabwe emphasised the integration of African indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) into national plans to address climate change.

“Our forefathers had unique ways of addressing natural disasters. This knowledge is available. All the ancient games have hidden wisdom that can solve the problems we are facing now. Our fathers knew crop rotation, grain storage among other gems. Let's harness and use this knowledge,” Mr. Matowanyika said.

Mr. Laban Ogallo, University of Nairobi, urged for the use of historical data which is available to solve climate problems.

“The future is now. Indigenous knowledge is vital and we should make use of it together with right technologies to predict the future,” he said.

Mr. Buruhani Nyenzi, a consultant from Tanzania called for meteorologists to be involved in the negotiations to provide good climate information.

“Combine adaptation and CIS for good results and advocacy on how to apply this knowledge at the grassroots,” Mr. Nyenzi said.

On his part, Mr. Amos Makarau, formerly of Zimbabwe Meteorological Services called for the integration of IKS in early warning systems in in-country networks to increase observation and fill gaps in spatial coverage.

He stressed the need to regulate issuance of climate information to protect producers and users.

Mr. Emmanuel Marfo, a Ghanaian Member of Parliament, noted that; “We need to understand how politics play out in international negotiations. Parliament is key in integrating CIS in budgets because they make legislations. Legislators should thus be involved in all issues related to climate change.”

Youth representatives at the meeting advocated for their greater inclusion in decision making forums.

“Expose the youth to challenges of policy making now so that they can know how better to find solutions rather than just be observers as the region suffers,” said Chinma George from Nigeria.

Barbara Nakangu from Makerere University, Uganda, urged the youth to join politics and be part of decision and policy making.

On the globes’ continued warming, Mr. Webster Whande of CDKN, South Africa, said the continent should develop tools to assess its collective progress of achieving the 1.5 degrees centigrade.

Mr. Robert Mbeche of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya, added that various agreements under UNFCCC and other agreements have not slowed down carbon emissions and temperatures were rising towards 3 degrees centigrade.

Mr. John Maesela of the Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, called on all African countries to join and support the Africa adaptation initiative, which focuses on loss and damage, strengthening policy and institutional frameworks and promoting grassroots implementation.

He added that the initiative is striving for concrete results for extreme events like droughts and floods and strengthening national implementing agencies for adaptation.

For continued development of solutions for the continent, Mr. James Kinyangi of the AfDB urged African countries to engage with the bank.

Participants in attendance recommended that engineers, climate resilience experts and disaster risk managers should work together to save the continent from losing money on infrastructure such as roads, bridges that are being washed away by floods yearly.

## Outcome

The main outcome of ACT-II was a contribution to the UNFCCC led Talanoa Dialogue process, which is provided in Annex I.

## About ACPC

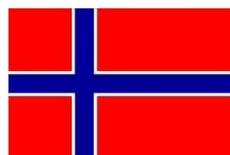
The African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) is a hub for demand-led knowledge on climate change in Africa. The Centre addresses the need for greatly improved climate information for Africa and strengthening the use of such information for decision making, by improving analytical capacity, knowledge management and dissemination activities.



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## Annex I: Submissions to the Talanoa Dialogue from the African Climate Talks (ACT!)

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### Introduction

We acknowledge that due to its rapid adoption and ratification, the Paris Agreement (PA) entered into force without any preparation (ground rules and rule book, modalities and guidelines). Until the ground rules are finalized, implementation is going to be extremely difficult. However, the development of the ground rules should be an opportunity to finesse the agreement and specially to address the concerns of Africa and the developing world regarding issues of equity, as well as CBDR.

The Paris Agreement is effectively a ‘deregulation/derogation’? of article 2(2) “This Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.”

Although Africa has a committee of African Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSCC); the African Ministerial Committee on Environment (AMCEN) providing political leadership at the pan African scale, in reality there is limited political leadership on climate change at the national level throughout the continent. This results in climate change being marginal in national political and development discourses across the continent, although this is the continent that is most heavily impacted by the phenomenon.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which are the main mechanisms for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, are completely voluntary and lacking in ambition at the aggregate level. On the other hand, Africa’s NDCs are overly ambitious, given the continent’s limited role in global warming. As such, every effort should be made to raise the ambition of the developed world. Consider regional dimension of NDCs.

Climate change and development are not mutually exclusive. There is therefore a need to link climate change negotiations with other development and trade negotiations. It is well established that the absence of linkages between the different regulatory frameworks results in the practice of avoiding legal restrictions in rich countries by moving manufacturing and waste to poor countries. For instance, the WHO does not have air-quality programmes in place for sub-Saharan Africa, though it does for Europe, the Western Pacific, and the Americas. Because of regulatory deficiencies, the oil industry complies with tighter restrictions on some continents by offloading dirtier fuel on others. There are many other ways by which emissions are transferred to Africa. This only results in increasing emissions from Africa, and yet this could be resolved by linking trade, health and climate change regulations. Climate change should be more comprehensively integrated into the WTO, the SDGs and Agenda 2063, with clear performance indicators.

Despite the agreement on a global goal on adaptation, the PA remains mitigation centric. More effort should be made to support adaptation in Africa. Already, many countries are diverting significant national funds and other resources towards climate change adaptation, and these expenditures need to be reflected and accounted for in the implementation of the agreement, and particularly in the further development of the climate finance mechanisms.

## On the Performance of the UNFCCC

The meeting noted with concern that despite the institution of the UNFCCC process in 1992, there has been no meaningful reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, atmospheric concentrations of GHG have been increasing, with already disastrous impacts on Africa.

The meeting recognized the ideological, political and economic challenges that face the UNFCCC and all its instruments. However, the meeting recommended that in order to be effective, the UNFCCC should explicitly address the enormous power imbalances that exist between the developed and developing world, and ensure that the principle of CBDR is brought back, with appropriate mechanisms for binding commitments to emissions reduction.

The market based mechanisms put in place to manage emissions and mitigation, especially REDD+ and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) have not been particularly effective in Africa for a variety of reasons. For REDD+, the project preparation overly complex – yet there is no guarantee for funding. The administrative costs tend to be extremely high, and there is a disconnect between global policy optimism and local realities of implementation of REDD+ initiatives – such as recentralization, leakage, permanence, monitoring, unmet community expectations and human rights abuses.

Instead of relying solely on market mechanisms and responses driven by the state, the UNFCCC should seek creative ways of engaging society. Non-state actors beyond the private sector have important roles to play in climate change adaptation and mitigation, but are not accorded adequate recognition in present agreements. The engagement of society in climate action requires that society be furnished with adequate and relevant information. This cannot be the responsibility of the media alone.

## Financing Mechanisms need to be rethought

The UNFCCC process should learn lessons from more successful multi-lateral agreements such as the Montreal Protocol and the WTO. What made the Montreal Protocol effective and how can this be adopted into the PA? The WTO negotiations are a permanent process, with rounds of negotiation dedicated towards resolving specific challenges in the agreement. The same principle of permanent negotiation should be adopted in the PA. WTO is a rule based organization, with e.g. formulae on how much each country should offer to reduce the tariffs.

South-South can help develop initiatives on finance and tech transfer through working with regional development Banks for example ADB, Asia Dev Bank

The meeting noted that Africa's contribution to the climate change narrative is very minimal, and this needs to be addressed. The continent should invest its own resources to promote a climate science which is multidimensional, focusing on all issues or threats that Africa faces. All the disciplines, including Anthropology, Finance, Meteorology are relevant. In order to strengthen African participation in understanding climate change and in designing responses, the continent should therefore consider the following:

- Create an African Climate Science Working Group
- Create stronger institutions at the continental level to enhance the integration of an African climate science into the continental and global arena. In this regard the meeting noted, with appreciation, the role that has been played by the African Group of Negotiators since its inception in unifying African voices and negotiating common African positions at the UNFCCC COPs. To enhance this contribution, the meeting recommended that:

- The African Union considers establishing a Commission on Climate Change
- The Climate Change Commission should in turn create a permanent secretariat supporting the AGN. This would enhance institutional accountability
- The Commission should raise domestic resources to support the AGN and wean it of reliance on foreign donors as this compromises the negotiations of African positions
- The Commission strengthens South-South Cooperation towards the 1.5 degrees target.

## On engaging African Knowledge Systems

The meeting noted that climate change governance has systematically marginalized endogenous knowledge systems, and yet local adaptation responses are based on local interactions with the climate, using local knowledge and observations. This has been exacerbated by a development model which is 'western centric' 'Formal' climate actions are detached/divorced from the societies in which they are implemented. It was further noted that the discourse on technology transfer has been dominated by western technologies. Yet there are many technologies among African communities and cultures which are locally relevant and resilient. There is need to disrupt the pattern of relying on western technologies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

To promote the inclusion of Endogenous Knowledge Systems in understanding and responding to climate change, investments should be made in the following:

- Promotion of co-learning and co-creation of information
- Translation and communication of information in other languages, including the promotion of media such as community radio
- Development of platforms where EKS knowledge systems can be shared
- Support for scientists to bring out the link between science and IKS
- Promotion of entrepreneurship for local innovations

## On "Thinking Big"

The meeting noted that the scale of the climate challenge in Africa is massive in terms of the resources required to support adequate adaptation and mitigation responses (including new technologies for avoiding emissions); as well as the policy and legal frameworks that are required to support climate informed decision making. The meeting further noted that the continent is investing in several large initiatives that are aimed at tackling the climate challenge at continental scale, including the Climate Change and Development in Africa (ClimDev – Africa) initiative; the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI); the Weather and climate information Services (WiSER) initiative; the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI); and the African Infrastructure Climate Resilience (AfriRes) Initiative, among others. These initiatives demonstrate the need to have response strategies that are properly scaled. However, none of these initiatives is properly supported both in terms of the requisite high level political recognition as well as the domestic financial resources necessary for successful implementation. These large scale initiatives also provide some key lessons for the future of climate governance:

1. There is a need to expand the scope of negotiations from a sectoral focus to economy wide focus.
  - Towards this end, negotiations and response strategies should focus on outcomes: poverty, livelihood, food security, water security [rather than agriculture, water, health] which are sectoral issues.

- Sector planning should be improved, and perhaps consider holistic planning – looking at sectors globally.
- 2. Funding mechanisms for climate change interventions should be reconsidered, and existing mechanisms are in urgent need of review and overhaul.
  - Financing institutions (e.g. AfDB; GCF, GEF etc.) should be asked to develop more flexible financing and disbursing mechanisms. In particular, climate finance institutions have adopted World Bank/IMF standards for processing what are essentially developmental rather than investment initiatives. New innovative procedures and standards are required which are based on the particular needs of climate finance.
  - Sourcing private finance from developed countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation should be improved, beyond the existing focus on investment opportunities. Creating carbon markets for private investment is potentially disastrous and these approaches should be reconsidered.
  - Domestic mobilization of resources should be encouraged, and this can be achieved by mainstreaming climate change adaptation into budgeting cycles in African countries.

There are numerous adaptation initiatives and interventions. However, many of these are informal, small scale and very fragmented. African governments are already contributing significant proportions of their budgets to supporting adaptation in their countries. There is, therefore, a need to recognize these contributions to climate change adaptation, and to factor them into climate finance arrangements. In return, frameworks for scaling up adaptation must be strengthened in order to improve coordination and avoid fragmentation.

The cost of climate change adaptation for African countries is massive, and increasing as climate disruptions become more frequent and intense. The current responses will not be sufficient to meet the required level of effort. As such continental scale initiatives to support climate change adaptation are welcome, and should be supported. However, there is a danger that new initiatives are being developed and launched at continental scale with little effort at coordination and alignment with existing initiatives. The African Union, in particular, should review the different resolutions and decisions of the continental decision makers on climate change and ensure that actions to implement these decisions are not duplicated, do not result in unnecessary fragmentation of the continental response, and that resource mobilization and the design of interventions is streamlined.

A big challenge for streamlining climate change into development policy in Africa is the limited availability of climate information, as well as the limited capacities of the climate information services agencies on the continent. Pan African initiatives such as the Weather Information Services (WiSER) are therefore crucial to supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation. Such interventions should be scaled up. The contributions of developed countries in funding and supporting WiSER and similar initiatives are acknowledged. Africa needs to put in place mechanisms to scale up and finance such initiatives from innovative resource mobilization mechanisms. For example, the continent could impose levies on all exported fossil fuels.

Pan African Institutions such as the Africa Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank should do more to document learning on adaptation and focus on scaling up. There are many good examples of such activities at local and national scales, such as the adaptation initiatives of the South African National Biodiversity Institute. There is no framework to support adaptation policies on the continent. The pan African institutions should develop innovative methodologies of documenting the impact of climate change and linking

these to adaptation strategies in order to inform the development of appropriate policy frameworks for adaptation.

Climate imperatives should be considered in infrastructure planning and development. Africa has a massive infrastructure deficit. Closing the gap will require huge investments. These investments should be informed by climate information. The cost of climate proofing of infrastructural investments should be factored into global climate finance, and innovative ways of directing funds to support relevant climate proofing investments. Policies should be developed to support the emerging standards in climate resilient project development. Climate finance could also be directed towards supporting such policy developments. Valuable lessons are emerging from ACPC and partners on climate proofing project development guidelines, compilation of good practices. Investments should also support closing gap between climate science and project design.

## On Climate Information and Services

Climate change has numerous disruptive impacts on economies, ecosystems and livelihoods. The public has right to information the causes and impacts of climate change. Weather and climate information should therefore be easily accessible to all. Given the uncertainties of weather and climate information, it should be provided by a credible and trusted source. However, most public weather and climate information providers are severely underfunded, and typically fail to fulfil their mandates. Consequently, the future of MET services in Africa threatened. Domestic resources should be directed towards enhancing MET services. Climate finance should also be readily available to support the public production and delivery of MET services.

The private sector is playing an increasingly important role in providing weather and climate information services. However, the policy and regulatory environment for the production and dissemination of CIS is rudimentary and needs to be developed very quickly to align private investments with public policy imperatives. The UNECA should invest in supporting the urgent development of an enabling environment for private sector participation and investment in CIS. African Met services should also be assisted to modernize to adapt to new demands of a changing climate. Urgent investments in CIS include:

- Integration of in-country networks to increase observations and fill gaps in special coverage
- Embracing opportunities such as big data, internet, smart sensors, cloud computing, and social media. Many of these are available in the private sector, and smart partnerships with Met departments should be developed.
- Maximization of benefits from cutting edge research and technical developments and innovations (which are also predominantly the domain of the private sector)
- Incorporate indigenous/endogenous knowledge in CIS

## Youth Perspectives

Key messages:

- The youth are involved in a number of local initiatives on climate change mitigation and adaptation but funding limited;
- Youth are pushing for a model that changes advocacy to action;
- Invest in youth to enhance their capacity to understand national issues;
- There is need to make youth ideologically conscious and politically engaged;
- There is need for coordination of many youth based organizations at the national level.

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