



Seventh African Development Forum

*Acting on Climate Change for Sustainable
Development in Africa*

Governance and Leadership Response to Climate Change

Issues Paper #1

ADF VII • 10 - 15 October 2010 • United Nations Conference Centre • Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



African Union



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I. Overview

1. Good governance is a critical element required for effective and sustained peace and security, economic growth and human development. As African States make strenuous efforts to meet the developmental goals enshrined in the internationally-agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is becoming increasingly apparent that without improved governance such goals cannot be attained. Managing climate change is also a governance issue. Africa is now facing a significant undertaking on climate-change adaptation amidst great adversity, instability and economic challenges. Governments are tasked with the responsibility of designing and implementing effective policies of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This requires organizational and institutional capacities as well as coherent actions built on accountable, transparent and participatory systems of governance.

2. The concept of good governance as illustrated in Fourth African Development Forum (ADF-IV) consensus document that articulated Africa's overarching challenge as the need to build a capable State where: peace and security is guaranteed; an enabling environment for equitably distributed economic growth with the promotion of education, health and social services is deepened; freedom of expression and vigorous exchange of views through a free and thriving media sector are encouraged; sound macro-economic management, institutional reform, and investment in human resources development, including in the critical area of gender equality are pursued; corruption is dealt with swiftly; and an enabling environment for the private sector to generate economic growth, jobs and income are strengthened. At the core of the capable State are political continuity and policy predictability and a fair and consistent application of the rule of law. Tackling climate change needs all of these ingredients and much more, within an effective global climate governance framework.

3. African governments through the African Union (AU) and its programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), have shown determined leadership by promoting good governance, underlining a stable, democratic and prosperous continent. The continued commitment to strengthening good governance and institutional capacities is made through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and other action plans supporting efforts to accelerate progress and the implementation of necessary reforms.

4. Despite these and other initiatives that make substantial commitments and promote understanding of good governance, **many of the predicted impacts of climate change, natural disasters, disease, and food insecurity** are likely to reverse any gains already made. African countries emit less than four per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions. However, these countries are expected to bear a disproportionate burden of the environmental impact caused. These new and strenuous conditions present an added cause of instability and exacerbate already existing stresses. Most African States do not have the capacity to adapt to the altering circumstances of climate change as quickly as developed countries, further weakening the possibility of achieving the intended goals of good governance and sustainable development.

Leadership: A governance agenda

5. A key element in good governance is the quality of leadership as measured by the degree of commitment, vision, transparency, efficiency and accountability in discharging the responsibilities of the State. Recent reports such as the ECA Governance Report indicate that there are positive trends for African countries in governance reforms. Among these are:

- a) The steady consolidation of democracy;
- b) Greater political inclusiveness;
- c) Expanded voice and accountability; and
- d) Improved economic management.

6. While these developments are encouraging and there is increasing convergence on the notion of good governance across Africa to propel a positive framework for sustainable development and improved governance mechanisms, a great deal still needs to be done. African governments, in order to avoid catastrophic reversals of recent successes in economic growth, must institute a strategic framework for the implementation of good governance strategies.

II. Main issues

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

7. Africa's Negotiating Position within this framework is to obtain a just global agreement that is strong enough to give the continent a sustainable future. This is no easy task to perform in the full public glare of international negotiations. However, it will affect the future living standards of everyone in Africa. The key to this process is strengthening Africa's position on how it wishes to solve its plight and inform the global debate with a deepened understanding of its interests and perspectives on how to curb the disastrous consequences of climate change.

Political governance

8. Political representation as a "central component of democratic governance" is a serious challenge in Africa. The executive and parliaments must represent the common good, especially in countries emerging from totalitarian rule, where parliaments tend to enact laws serving narrow factional interests rather than the wider public good. To improve the role of parliaments, greater independence from the executive is needed to effect their primary oversight role. Responding to climate change may well involve new investments which are greater than current levels of foreign development assistance. These will require expenditure scrutiny, investigative capacity, fiscal management and so on. Accurate reporting of progress with adaptation and mitigation processes is essential. The capacity and skills of parliamentarians need to be strengthened to meet these new demands.

9. Across the continent, there is low representation of women, youth and rural voices in decision-making processes. Indeed, multiparty politics is increasingly becoming the acceptable way to compete for the political space. However, there still remains a wide gap for government to fill in terms of lack of dialogue with citizens and of the will to seek consensus on public policies. Political representation

is an important mechanism for making voices heard. In relation to climate change, those affected have direct knowledge of the challenges and strategies for coping as well as the ability to mobilize communities to respond to and prepare for the impact of climate change and natural disasters.

Institutional capacity-building

10. In terms of public-sector reform, governments must improve the quality of performance and availability of climate-related information to citizens. Institutions should sensitize and augment public-service capacity by upgrading skills and incentives aimed at preserving qualified and dedicated staff able to incorporate accountable and transparent mechanisms in delivering services. For improved service orientation, procedures for citizens to access government services should be simplified and must be designed with the user in mind.

11. Capable institutions means that they are guided by the users, allowing them to participate more fully in decision-making processes and to articulate the specific needs and demands of a diverse society. It also means persistent adaptation towards increased efficiency, transparency and accountability. Committees and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may be enlisted to monitor and evaluate climate services, especially in rural areas. Institutional decentralization and special measures must be put in place to ensure participation of women, youth, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable groups.

Economic governance and public financial management

12. The economic cost of weak governance has devastating implications for Africa's ability to achieve sustainable development. Effective, transparent and accountable public financial management is central to a functioning democracy. Indeed, growth is driven by good governance, an enhanced business climate and stable macroeconomic policies. If Africa is to achieve growth and prosperity against this background of climate-change vulnerabilities, it must critically address the issues of inequality and achieve fairness and opportunity for all members of its society. At the core, to achieve sustainable development, it will have to reduce or minimize the impact of corruption by empowering its citizenry, establishing strong institutional frameworks and strengthening the administrative and technical capacities of its public administrators.

13. Governments need to promote a vigorous impetus to stimulate trade and investment and prompt private-sector activity. Given the potential of climate change to weaken key sectors, substantial progress towards pro-poor growth requires, among other things, the steady management of its natural resources and active citizenry participation in the economy. The challenges facing African countries due to the indirect or direct stress of climate change are likely to impact their economic activities and the onus is on Africa to prepare robust strategies and demonstrate a plan that will ameliorate its vulnerabilities.

Private-sector development and corporate governance

14. The private sector plays a central role in climate change, both as a causal entity and in mitigating impacts and building resilience. Given appropriate incentive mechanisms, the unique expertise of the 'socially responsible' private sector, its capacity to innovate and produce new technologies for adapta-

tion and its financial leverage, can play an important part in the various efforts underway to mitigate the threats of climate change.

15. The impact of climate change will be felt most strongly in developing countries, which will need investments between \$US26 to 87 billion annually in order to avoid an additional burden falling on their existing development needs (UNFCCC/TP/2008/7). Most of the climate change programmes and low-carbon growth plans, particularly in developing countries, are contingent on large sums of private financing being made available through international carbon markets. Therefore, private investors, governments, and international financial institutions must work together to overcome the current barriers that restrict capital flows into the sectors that support climate-change mitigation and adaptation. This underlines the main ethos of the UNFCCC Private Sector Initiative, which calls for effective engagement in the wider adaptation community as a means to support mitigation and adaptation to climate change in a coherent and integrated manner.

Rule of law

16. Africa's rule of law must be strengthened to ensure efficient and effective enforcement responses and compliance to national legal frameworks that foster environmental commitments. The rule of law underpins virtually every issue. Whether talking about food and product safety, or environmental implementation, all variables hinge on having an effective rule of law. Without this, Africa will not be able to promote awareness or prohibit illegal activities. Many of the important mitigation actions will need to be effected in isolated areas and the rule of law may not always stretch this far, where such actions are very vulnerable. Attempts to strengthen local capacity and the capacity of lawyers, judges and legal experts as well as cooperation between law-enforcement agencies within and among countries will be necessary, to avert the detrimental effects of climate change, which are likely to become the source of conflict in the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

Peace and security

17. As control of and access to natural resources become increasingly essential, considerable population migrations in response to adverse climatic conditions are likely to lead to increased risk of conflicts and instability in the region. Mitigation strategies alone will not be an adequate response, making it necessary to develop an adaptive strategy that addresses the increasing security risk posed by climate change.

18. Such action must include intensive efforts to understand the causal relationship between conflict and climate change, and address issues of disaster preparedness and building local adaptive capacity to moderate the migration from affected areas. In addition, mainstreaming measures to protect immigrants and displaced persons into existing frameworks of conflict-prevention mechanisms is essential.

Independence of civil society organizations

19. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a major role either in strengthening local capacity to cope or by supporting local action. Successful adaptation requires a host of innovative measures developed with vulnerable communities to improve their present and future. This requires a multitude of independent CSOs developing and sharing best practices.

CSOs and NGOs provide the citizenry with a channel for their voices and the means to serve as watchdogs enforcing political transparency and accountability. However, many CSOs are often seen as adversarial rather than complementary to government. Civil society attacks on State policies can sometimes undermine legitimate achievements.

20. A large number of CSOs operate exclusively as service providers, abandoning the important policy advocacy role crucial for pressurizing government. Furthermore, CSOs need to be differentiated based on their transparency and credibility since they are not all operating as independent watchdog organizations and may be opportunistic and partisan. They, as well as individuals, may also suffer from laws that restrict their activities and hamper their rights. Governments often question the legitimacy of human rights movements, thereby undermining their watchdog role.

Independence of the media

21. Working with the media to spread awareness and to encourage active debate on priorities is important. Independence of the media is crucial for holding incompetent, inefficient and corrupt institutions or agencies to account, especially in terms of policies and service delivery. Climate change is complex, so well-informed media is absolutely essential to maximize its effectiveness and minimize chaos and confusion.

III. Conclusion

22. In order to respond to the inevitable impacts of climate change, policy responses must be strengthened, and local communities as well as national governments need access to “appropriate economic resources, technology, information, skills and infrastructure”. Creating an “enabling environment facilitated by suitable policies and programmes at the local, national and international levels” is vital. Moreover, African leaders must engage the international community firmly in the negotiations for political and economic solutions. Establishing a “common negotiating stance and a clear position” on the main issues is indispensable. Though, massive responsibility has been placed on African leaders, solutions must stem from within Africa while developed countries “should ensure financing of adaptation and appropriate mitigation actions using new and additional sources of swiftly accessible funds which will ensure that the existing international aid and commitment are met” (Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Nicholas Stern).

Main recommendations and actions required

23. Good governance is beyond the scope of ‘normal’ climate change topics but is an area where improvement is absolutely critical and will result in many important collateral benefits. Fostering good governance in Africa means building a continent with capable democratic States, comprising strong institutions that promote the public interest and include the participation of all stakeholders, with particular emphasis on women, youth and vulnerable groups. Urgent and coordinated action is needed to address capacity deficits, especially those related to managing the climate-change process with its diverse impacts and unique opportunities.

Leadership

24. Good governance is a leadership issue, enshrining the effective, transparent, and accountable discharge of responsibilities vis-à-vis climate change, within the framework of capable States working together for their common good. Actions include:

- a) The Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOS-GCC), which needs active support by all Heads of State, strengthened by (i) the best scientific information available, (ii) informed debate on issues, and (iii) an active process of awareness-raising across the continent;
- b) The High-Level Panel on Climate Change Financing that is working to recommend not only methods of raising adequate finance but also appropriate means of governance and disbursement measures. This work needs concerted support by the relevant stakeholders; and
- c) UNFCCC, through which African negotiators must obtain a fair and strong agreement through the Conference of Parties (COP) process, to ensure that the continent gains a future worth living.

25. Improving governance in Africa is ultimately a national project within a globally-coordinated strategy for Climate Risk Assessment and Management. Africa must strengthen and deepen its understanding of the governance issues surrounding climate change, in order to improve governance policies, practices and procedures. A participatory political process that allows political freedom and human rights, unfettered operation of the media and civil society, institutionalization of languages understood by African populations, and promotion of private-sector development is essential, to prevent deepening of existing challenges and reduction of climate-change liabilities, as well as avoid other related crises.

26. In concrete terms, this requires:

- a) **Greater awareness and African-led research and knowledge**
Countries from the continent have to be able to engage with regard to policies, plans and practices at the local, national and international levels. This will lead to positive efforts in understanding the causal relationship between climate change, governance, sustainable development, and peace and security. It will also build awareness and develop tools and processes to facilitate responses by the State, intergovernmental and non-state actors. Efforts towards increased investment in research and education are also required for developing new and home-grown solutions to stimulate behavioral changes and accommodate climate change;
- b) **African countries to develop strategies for adaptation to climate change**
Although challenging, this is necessary if the development agenda is not to be undermined or sabotaged. There is need to have a clearer understanding of the potential calamities that climate change can bring and to start the discourse on how best to starve off the worst impacts. No longer can climate change be seen as merely an environmental problem or an energy challenge. Clear and coherent approaches have to be designed and formulated by African countries so that together they are able to address the climate-change challenges. The problem is not localized but transcends national borders, potentially causing conflict and affecting security at the national and regional levels.

c) Strengthened rule of law and regulatory frameworks

This will lay the foundation for the higher judicial standards and rigorous enforcement mechanisms that are lacking in most African justice systems. Clear and concise laws and regulations are needed to ensure effective enforcement mechanisms and compliance. There are complex socioeconomic and environmental challenges as well as endemic corruption within the legal system. An independent, efficient and accessible judicial and legal system which applies the law equally to all its citizens will go a long way towards protecting them and the environment. Institutional policy reforms are vital to enactment of new laws and strengthening of enforcement of existing laws, to demonstrate the legality and sustainability of climate change and related matters.

d) Strengthened capacity of non-state actors

African governments, often characterized by a host of challenges in getting support at the national and local levels, benefit from: (i) well-organized NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve to highlight the areas of concern, establish awareness, and support advocacy for relevant stakeholders; (ii) the media as another excellent channel for illuminating the threats of climate change. Through this process, opportunities can be identified and policies formulated in response. A great deal can be gained from adaptation experiences in other local communities, lesson-learning across the continent and internationally; and (iii) the private sector, in particular, business associations, which play a leading role in ensuring that different governance initiatives tie together into one comprehensive set of private-sector efforts to promote sustainable development. This, however, rests on the incentives motivating private-sector companies and their own role in shaping those incentives.

e) Reformed governance institutions

Reforms should strengthen the public sector, including institutions of local government so as to improve service delivery, develop adequate checks and balances, and mainstream climate-change issues into development policies and practices.

f) Transformed international partnership

This requires increased financial assistance, technical support and access to the new, green technologies that countries on the continent need to adopt. **Shared problems** such as climate change require shared solutions. NEPAD, for example, is a compact between Africa's leaders and its people on one hand, and between Africa and international development partners on the other. The principle of mutual accountability is the central basis for restructuring international relationships in a globalizing world in which climate interdependency is inevitable. This is precisely the kind of principle that NEPAD and APRM are designed to uphold.

g) Strong, effective partnerships built within Africa

In line with the shared aspiration of developing an African-owned agenda for good governance, this has implications for strengthening existing regional institutional partnerships. Regional institutions and other specialized agencies should be strengthened to take on climate change and governance issues and to work with research and policy institutes to design mitigation policies and programmes in the national, regional and international organizations.

h) Tracking and monitoring

Good governance and compliance in relation to climate change are of paramount importance. Managing climate change is a global project for which failure cannot be entertained. Rogue States cannot be tolerated. Failure to meet global emission reduction targets could lead to a catastrophic decline in human population and civilization. As such, all organizations including AUC, African Development Bank (AfDB) and ECA as well as national governments and regional institutions, should actively promote mechanisms for tracking and monitoring enforcement and compliance.

i) A Strengthened Joint Secretariat of AUC, AfDB and ECA

This secretariat needs to be strengthened. Climate change is a global issue and Africa needs a clear voice in global negotiations and harmonious policies and actions throughout. The need to address the climate-change challenge has strengthened the role of other regional bodies such as the European Union (EU). Similarly, AU embodies the aim of African States to form an integrated, active, body on the world stage. If confronting climate change together helps to achieve Africa's long-standing goal of regional integration, then this is most welcome. AU capabilities, especially financial, are lacking and external support to help the organization is clearly required.