



**unitar**

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

# Getting it Right: Reporting climate change for sustainable development in Africa”

## African Media Training Workshop Report

UNECA Headquarters  
October 8 to 10, 2010  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



## Introduction and Background

In 2009 UNITAR coordinated a training for staff of UNECA to enhance their understanding of the climate change debate and allow them better serve their constituents in Africa, for whom the impacts of climate change have become a threat and could delay development.

This training was considered as a resounding success by both UNITAR and UNECA. It was therefore against this background that ECA once again contacted UNITAR to undertake a similar training for approximately 20 media representatives to improve reporting on climate change.

The 3-day training event drew media representatives from west, central, northern and southern Africa and took place as a pre- event to the seventh African Development Forum (ADF), held on 11-15 October 2010 with the theme: "Acting for Climate Change for Sustainable Development in Africa and was also an additional opportunity for the selected media representatives to cover the proceedings of the ADF for their respective media outlets.

## Training objectives and expected outputs

The main objectives of the training workshop were to improve and enhance accurate reporting on climate change by introducing journalists to the key themes of the climate change regime. More specifically the training workshop sought to:

1. inform African media about the threats and opportunities presented by the climate change phenomenon;
2. enable African Media to analyze and report more effectively on climate change concerns, in particular as reflected in development policies and practices;
3. familiarize African media about the process so far and the issues that require targeted awareness in the lead up to the Cancun negotiations; and
4. Support the prioritization of Africa's agenda, priorities, initiatives and programmes in the news media.

## Training Methodology and delivery

The training workshop took place over two and a half days and the training agenda was divided into three main parts to ensure that the training would address the key elements that would enable journalists improve their reporting on climate change. These parts were:

**Part I:** Address the main components of the climate change regime i.e Adaptation, Mitigation, Finance and technology to familiarize the journalists with the main pillars of the climate change debate;

**Part II:** insights from other media practitioners and communication experts on their reporting experiences so as to show case good practices and gaps in climate change reporting

**Part III:** discussion and networking to allow the journalists learn from each other and also form networks that can be very useful even after the official close of the workshop



Six experts within these areas were invited as resource persons and each allotted at least two hours to share their insights and vision with the journalists. Following each presentation ample time was allowed for questions and answers that enriched the training experience.

### Training evaluation

A self assessment questionnaire was distributed to all the training participants to assess how this training on climate change was perceived and if the objectives had been attained. Overall the feedback from about 23 respondent's points to a successful training event and all respondents expressed their appreciation for the initiative. The evaluation form was designed to assess the level of knowledge of the journalists before and after the training

### Presentation of the Results

Name of Training session	Number of respondents	Rating <b>Before</b>	Rating <b>After</b>
Climate change Adaptation and mainstreaming	23	17% Low	0% Low
		21% Some	5% some
		43% Average	14% Average
		35% Above Average	50% Above average
		0% High	30% High
The UNFCCC Negotiation process and the role of African negotiators	23	30% Low	0% Low
		26% Some	4% some
		26% Average	30% Average
		9% Above average	35% above average
The role of the media in the climate change debate and process	23	9% High	30% High
		4% low	0% low
		22% Some	0% some
		22% Average	0%Average
		35% Above Average	52% Above Average
Mitigation of Climate change	22	17% High	48% High
		14% Low	0% Low
		5% Some	0% Some



Name of Training session	Number of respondents	Rating Before	Rating After
		18% Average	26% Average
		18% Above Average	43% Above Average
		9% high	30% High
Financing climate change adaptation and mitigation	18	25% Low	0% low
		28% Some	0% Some
		11% Average	24% Average
		11% Above Average	48% Above average
		0% High	29% High

From the results presented it is evident that all participants felt they gained from the resource persons and the knowledge they shared. This is a positive result considering that the participants had different degrees of knowledge and an insight that the presentations given were able to accommodate all the different knowledge levels.

Secondly the results reveal that the journalists seemed to lack the least knowledge in the area of financing for climate change, as this recorded the highest number of respondents that said they had no prior knowledge.

Thirdly the session on the role of the media, recorded the highest prior knowledge, not a surprise since this is their profession and many are already aware of the contribution journalists make. Still there was enlightenment on how they can contribute to the climate change debate.

Finally the results from the technical sessions show that the journalist's knowledge was greatly enhanced after the presentations (UNFCCC process, Adaptation and Mitigation) as these sessions recorded the highest percentage after the delivery of the training.

The journalists also listed the following points expressing their opinion on the training in general;

1. They enjoyed the quality of interactions and sharing of experiences and noted how timely and important the training was;
2. They appreciated the time made available by all the experts to further explain the technical issues;
3. They felt the training agenda was well rounded and the sessions enhanced their learning and knowledge.
4. Some noted that they would have liked for more breakout sessions and a few would have preferred more than 3 days training
5. A few seemed to struggle understanding the technical translations and also mentioned they would have preferred to receive the presentations earlier.



## Recommendation and next steps

Judging from the enthusiasm shown for the training it is evident that all journalists recognized the value of engaging in the training and all felt they gained new knowledge, networked and learnt from others on how to overcome reporting challenges. It is therefore recommended that a similar initiative be organized periodically. Building capacity is a continuous effort and one off training workshops are not enough if the accurate reporting on climate change among African journalists is to be improved. It is therefore crucial that there is continuity of the training as opposed to always starting from ground zero. It is against this background that the following suggestions are made as next steps:

1. A selection process should be undertaken to select environmental journalists representing all regions in Africa, trained to become the role models and experts in Africa.
2. The journalists that have participated in the training should form a network that can allow them to continue the sharing and learning
3. The idea to hold the training before the ADF was very timely as it allowed the journalists to further digest the newly acquired knowledge, meet important sources of information. Organizing similar trainings around key events where possible is therefore encouraged.
4. The initiative through the ACPC website to include a resource of information on climate change for the journalists is a welcomed initiative and will greatly contribute to accurate reporting. It remains for the ACPC to ensure the visibility of the knowledge centre
5. Finally UNITAR – CCP has since 1994 been engaged in climate change capacity building efforts for policy makers, researchers and selected institutions from the South, in efforts to enhance the ability of developing countries address the impacts of climate. As a result UNITAR would be available to work with UNECA and share this acquired expertise and resources to build capacity of other pairs such as journalist.

More Information:

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