

Does climate-smart agriculture hold the key to Africa banishing hunger by 2025?

By Fatima Denton

Imagine an Africa in which hunger has been banished. Imagine that hunger can be history in a decade. This is the vision that led our leaders to pledge to end hunger by 2025, and to declare 2014 the Year of Agriculture and Food Security.

Now imagine that Africa could be food self-sufficient because of climate change. As unfamiliar as this counter-narrative might seem, climate change represents an opportunity for Africa to think and act differently, to change the way it views growth and interacts with the environment, to choose a different path toward sustainable development.

When set against the stark reality of African agriculture, the 'Zero Hunger' goal may appear ambitious.

Africa is home to close to 30% of the world's arable land and remains the dominant sector in many African economies, employing 70% of the workforce, accounting for 30% of GDP and generating 50% of the exports of the continent. Yet it remains the least productive and least invested-in sector. As a result, a third of Africans are chronically hungry and malnourished.

Practices such as deforestation and over-exploitation have helped degrade 65% of Africa's arable land. Climate change is placing additional stress on an already fragile agricultural system. Experts warn that a 2° C rise in global temperature could reduce African crop yields by 10% by 2050.

Add to this the fact that more than 90% of Africa's agriculture is rain-fed, with only 4% of its land under irrigation, compared to 39% in South Asia. Water is the defining challenge for the continent's agriculture. With the frequency of unpredictable weather patterns, the sector will be increasingly exposed to acute water shortages, further exacerbating the continent's food insecurity.

Throw in the fact that by 2050, 60% of Africans will live in cities. In a changing climate, how can African agriculture meet the twin objectives of feeding its growing, and increasingly urban population, while curbing hunger and attaining food self-sufficiency?

Given this picture, skeptics may be forgiven for asking how realistic it is to talk up climate change as an opportunity for Africa, rather than an existential threat. At the same time, Africa continues to register some of the strongest economic growth rates in the world – buoyed in large part by agricultural productivity. Of course we know that these figures will mean nothing if the growth is not people-centered, if the dividends of growth are not equitably distributed to the majority of the population.

Shifting paradigm

We firmly believe the 'Zero Hunger' target is achievable. Part of the solution lies in African countries investing 10% of their GDP in agriculture as proposed by the AU's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) in 2003. The idea is that with this investment African countries should aim towards a 6% GDP growth target for the sector.

So how do we get there? By making substantial investments in a climate-smart and climate-resilient model of agriculture that can usher in a new era of clean and sustainable growth for Africa. For Africa to feed itself and sustain its growth momentum, it needs to break the link between hunger and defective agricultural models. The continent needs to increase its investment in climate science and innovations, which are central to enhance agricultural performance in a changing climate.

The dearth of climate data and information is at the heart of the disconnect between science and policy and the lack of appropriate climate adapta-

tion planning in agriculture. Innovative approaches such as the 'News You Can Use' climate information initiative – unveiled at the UN Climate Summit last month – is of particular relevance to Africa.

More importantly, Africa needs to forge partnerships to build its own climate adaptation and resilience capacity. In this context, ClimDev-Africa, the Africa Climate and Development Partnership established by the AU, African Bank and UN Economic Commission for Africa, has the mandate and experience to bridge the knowledge and capacity gaps facing African countries.

In Marrakech, Morocco this week, African policy makers, scientists and other key stakeholders are grappling with the task of establishing a regional hub for Africa's climate science research, something that is critically needed if climate science is to inform and influence policy.

New technologies

As we know, the pathway from evidence to policy is anything but linear. There are many differing views on science and its ability to boost agricultural productivity. For Zimbabwean telecommunications entrepreneur and agriculture champion Strive Masiyiwa, the Green Revolution has already begun in Africa, with new food production techniques and practices pointing the way to improved agricultural productivity.

Calestous Juma, a world-leading Kenyan scientist, argues that innovation-driven agricultural growth, including the selective use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), has the potential to drastically transform African economies and societies. Malawi's late President Bingu Wa Mutharika increased agricultural investment to 16% and improved the supply of inputs, including GMOs and seeds. As a result, substantial yields led to Malawi becoming food self-sufficient and exporting sur-



Ms. Fatima Denton, Director, Special Initiatives Division

plus maize to neighboring countries.

Other countries such as Nigeria are following suit, introducing dry season farming and drought tolerant seeds, setting up agro-meteorological stations, promoting crop insurance and other climate-smart approaches. Uganda has chosen to pursue organic farming in a bid to tap into a highly lucrative global organic food market, which is estimated to grow from \$ 57.5 billion in 2010 to close \$105 billion in 2015.

Green revolutions have been an integral part of the development story of the BRICS countries. Modernizing agriculture and transforming rural economy were key to China's success. China and India have also shown how surpluses from agricultural productivity can stimulate industrial growth. In addition, the development of the agriculture value chain is critical – as testified by Brazil and China's thriving agri-business and agro-industries. If the BRICS can banish hunger, why not Africa?

Global Attention Shifts As "Africa Wants To Feed Africa"

By Atayi Babs

As the dust of the recently concluded climate march in New York begins to settle, global attention has once again shifted to Africa as the fourth edition of the Climate Change Development in Africa (CCDA-IV) conference sets sail.

With the screaming theme "Africa can feed Africa now: translating climate knowledge into action", the conference, which is organised by the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) is taking place in Marrakech, Morocco, between 8 to 10 October 2014.

According to Fatima Denton, the ACPC Coordinator, the conference will promote the use of climate information to enhance agricultural performance in a changing climate and to maintain the momentum of economic growth, with a view to helping Africa to feed itself and eliminating poverty.

Addressing the pre-conference event in Marrakech, Ken Johm stated that the Conference will "focus on how the continent can feed its people and

sustain growth in the face of climate change challenges. Specifically, it will address how to make use of available climate information, clean energy technology, innovation, research and development to enhance agricultural performance and achieve economic structural transformation."

On her part, Olushola Olayide of the African Union Commission expressed optimism that the conference will provide a platform for sharing experiences, addressing emerging climatic challenges, and exploring opportunities related to climate change to enhance the agricultural value chain and ensure food security both now and in the future.

With Climate change complicating efforts to find solutions to Africa's inability to deploy its agriculture to match the needs of its growing population, it has therefore become imperative for Africa to consider options such as improving agricultural performance and enhancing capacity, with a view to turning climate challenges into opportunities and facilitating broad-based poverty reduction and food security for all.

As Agriculture remains a key driver of Africa's economic growth, providing employment opportu-

nities for its young and rapidly growing population, experts believe that the global attention will focus on the capacity of the continent's agricultural value chain to provide multiple entry points and pathways for advancing Africa's transformative agenda towards a green economy and low carbon development.

It is hoped that the four sub-themes of the Fourth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa will provide in-depth analyses of the agricultural value chain, with a view to reinvigorating productivity and achieving food security and sufficiency throughout the continent.

Experts in Marrakech also say that for Africa to feed Africa, the conference must also identify strategic areas for increased investment in climate change research, development and innovation as well as explore ways of making technology accessible and affordable for farmers, to enhance opportunities for easy access to agricultural finance and insurance, to facilitate trading and access to markets at all levels, and to create an enabling environment for private sector investment in the agricultural value chain.

Did you know?...

The Marrakech Accords are a set of agreements reached in 2001 at the 7th Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Accords outline the rules of meeting the targets set out in the Kyoto Protocol.



Climate research and impact communities to tap into Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology

By Aloysius Fomenky

It has emerged from a conference of African climate research and impact communities underway in Marrakech, Morocco that the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology is an important building block towards the establishment of a climate change research agenda for the Continent.

Dr. Joseph R. Mukabana, Director, Regional Office of Africa and Least Developed Countries at the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) told the meeting that the integrated strategy positions National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) as key components of national and regional development frameworks for sustainable development in Africa, particularly in poverty reduction efforts, climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

The Strategy, he said focuses on five interrelated pillars, including increased political support and recognition of NMHSs and related WMO Regional Climate Centres; enhanced production and delivery of weather and climate services for sustainable development; improved access to meteorological services, in particular for the marine and aviation sectors; supported provision of weather and climate services for climate change adaptation and mitigation; and, strengthened partnerships with relevant institutions and funding mechanisms.

Participants also agree that the strategy which was endorsed by the Executive Council of the African Union last year could actually ensure the implementation of a structured Global Framework



for Climate Service (GFCS) in Africa.

Specifically, pillar 4 of the strategy addresses the enhancement of research and development and mainstreaming of the use of climate information in decision-making, which are coherent with the goals set out by Climate Research for Development (CR4D).

The meeting is held under the aegis of ECA/African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) and the World Meteorological Organisation "to devise an institutional platform for linking African climate science research and knowledge to inform adaptation decision-making in on the Continent.

Dr. Mukabana who is also Director of the AMCOMET Secretariat revealed that AMCOMET has developed a resource mobilization plan for the implementation of the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology, and that the plan would be approved during the Third Session of AMCOMET, scheduled for Cape Verde, from 11 to 14 February 2015.

He called on participants to highlight the linkages of the CR4D initiatives to the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology, arguing that these linkages would harmonize the approach in climate research and reduce overlap and duplication of efforts.

forts.

"This will also streamline our message of aiming to achieve the same overall objective, in particular with Development Partners. It is critical that Africa is seen as delivering as one in all matters related to the enhancement of the access and use of weather and climate services", he said.

Their meeting ends on the eve the Fourth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IV) which opens in Marrakech on 8th October 2014.

African climate research, impact communities applaud progress on ClimDev Special Fund

By Aloysius Fomenky

A group of African climate research and impact communities today welcomed with great satisfaction progress made towards the forthcoming launch of the ClimDev-Africa Special Fund that will help finance climate change research and programmes in Africa.

Addressing the opening session of the meeting, in Marrakech, Mr Ken Johm, Coordinator for special initiatives in the agriculture and agro-industry department at the African Development Bank (AfDB) briefed participants on the imminent launch of the Fund, assuring that it would soon be ready to finance credible climate change projects on the Continent.

The Fund is hosted by the African Development Bank. Mr. Johm recalled the support that AfDB has made to climate change projects across the continent and said that the new Fund would fur-

ther strengthen that assistance to institutions and scientists.

Participants began meeting in Marrakech, Morocco, Monday to agree a research collaboration platform on climate science in Africa that will be announced at the Fourth Annual Conference on climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IV) which opens here Wednesday.

Opening the meeting, Ms Fatima Denton, Director of the Special Initiatives Division at the UN Economic Commission for Africa prodded 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 promised that under the auspices of ClimDev-Africa programme, the African Climate Policy Centre is initiating \$1 Million Dollar capacity building programme to support the training of young African scientists in all areas of climate change and development.

She traced ClimDev's support to the project back to its inception at the Arusha (Tanzania) conference and promised continued assistance in the provision of space, time and resources because the objectives of CR4D chime with the overall goals of ClimDev-Africa.

The guest of honor at the meeting, Mr Joseph Mukabana, Director, Department of Africa and Lest Developed Countries at the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), harped on the central role WMO has played in fostering research and development for operational climate services in Africa, announcing the eminent creation of a metrological institute for the Central African region.

He welcomed the choice of the meeting's key objective, which is to define a common climate research agenda for Africa and to address priority

research gaps to deliver relevant climate services for end-users across the continent.

For two days, the meeting will review priority activities identified at ACC2013 Conference, seek new ways to advance climate science research frontiers in Africa-priorities based on societal needs and; identify climate research needs for policy and development 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 Africa Climate Research for Development (CR4D-2014) is hosted by ClimDev-Africa with support from a number of institutions including ECA/ACPC, FutureEarth, World Climate Research Programme, Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security as well as the UK government.



Mr. Ken B. Johm, Coordinator for Special Initiatives, AfDB

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ClimDev-Africa calling for more investment in climate change research

By Thérèse Isséki

ClimDev-Africa Program is inviting Africa to invest more in climate change research to ensure food self-sufficiency at the fourth edition of the Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA IV), scheduled to take place on 8-10 October in Marrakesh, Morocco.

'For Africa to feed itself now and in the future, it needs to make further investment in climate change research, biotechnology and development, and innovation' emphasized ClimDev-Africa, a consortium of three leading pan-African institutions, namely the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

This programme, which advocates 'an African solution to climate change', asserts 'the need to make technology accessible and affordable to farmers, increase access to agricultural financing and insurance, facilitate market access and trade

at all levels, and create a favorable environment for private sector investment in the agricultural value chain'.

The programme acknowledges however that agricultural performance could not be improved without adequate investment in clean and efficient energy, a driver for transformation of the agricultural value chain and food without increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

For this programme hosted at the African Climate Policy Center (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), 'it is equally important to gain a better understanding of the linkages between agriculture, energy and water and how Africa can take advantage of ecosystems and the natural environment to attain food self-sufficiency.'

Many experts, academics, political leaders, civil society representatives and institutions engaged in climate and development are invited to find ways and means to apply this equation for Africa to enjoy climate change opportunities.

The Fourth Conference on Climate Change

and Development in Africa, to be held on 8 to 10 October in Marrakesh, presents the opportunity for leading intellectuals and practitioners convened at this event to provide the continent with a direction to ensure that it benefits from the tremendous climate change opportunities.

In addition to climate research, the Marrakesh event will also provide the space for deliberations of a host of other important matters regarding the continent's development, including the role of climate data, information and knowledge for agricultural production, the management of water resources and food security, the potential of agriculture to unleash the development of renewable energy in Africa, and innovation and technology for the transformation of agriculture in a changing climate.

ClimDev-Africa (Climate for Development in Africa) is a consortium of three leading pan-African institutions, namely the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).



Rescuing Africa's Agriculture

By Thérèse Isséki

Close to 500 policy makers, academics, practitioners and other stakeholders from the agriculture and climate change sectors will gather on 8 October in Marrakesh, Morocco, in a bid to come to the rescue of Africa's agriculture which, instead of falling victim to climate change, should seize climate change opportunities for a more harmonious development of the continent.

At the invitation of ClimDev-Africa, the participants of the Fourth Edition of the Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDAIV) on the theme 'Africa Can Feed Africa Now: Translating Climate Knowledge into Action', will reflect primarily on agriculture, as all research point to agriculture as the key engine of economic growth in Africa.

While contributing to close to 30% of GDP and 50% of total exports, and employing over 70% of the population in most non-oil economies, and despite being one of the key sectors in Africa, agriculture continues to rely heavily on rainfall, and as such, is vulnerable to climate change.

According to various studies, the impacts of climate change are particularly severe in Africa, given the continent's low adaptive capacity owing to weak institutional, economic and financial capacity. It is therefore crucial to understand the potential impacts of current and future climate change on the African agriculture and to identify ways and means to adapt to and mitigate the adverse effects, in order to enhance agriculture's performance and sustainability.

In Marrakech, participants will not take stock or delve deeper into the adverse effects of climate change on African agriculture – these issues have been reiterated enough. They have now to take action and provide the continent with a clear roadmap laying out implementation means to ensure that the African agriculture takes advantage of climate opportunities.

To that effect, Fatima Denton, ClimDev-Africa Coordinator, set the tone by declaring that: 'Africa has to see how to view climate change not as a challenge, but rather as an opportunity to transform some of its climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, energy and water'.

'We have a pool of knowledge and we have to see how we can turn climate change in our favour. The key is to identify existing opportunities in the various sectors' she emphasized.

For ClimDev-Africa, which is hosting the event, it is critical to understand the role of ecosystems and nature, and the efficient agricultural water management for improved productivity in agriculture.

To do that, African countries have to formulate and adopt agricultural policies that strengthen

agricultural water management while taking into account the needs of ecosystems, to make agriculture more inclusive and resilient to future climate change impacts.

It was recalled that, over the last years, emphasis was rightly placed on improving climate data and information in Africa with the upgrading of climate observation networks, climate data rescue and the consolidation of rare observations through reanalysis and remote sensing.

These refined climate data and information could also be reanalyzed and packaged according to climate science reference standards, knowledge base and tools required for decision-making and that are appropriate to Africa's climate conditions.

Other ways include the packaging and translation of available climate data into useful information, making them readily available to end-users, and the upgrading of services to significantly reduce risks and uncertainties related to climate change.

Refined climate information will enhance the management of water resources in agriculture, of seeds and timely harvesting, of storage, of transformation and transport to markets. Climate knowledge base and tools for decision making provide scientific evidence and contribute to policy design and decision making in agriculture and other development sectors. They also offer possible adaptation options and alternative ways of development that are resilient to climate change in Africa, as highlighted by the Conference background documents.

As the year 2014 is dedicated to agriculture, this sub-theme that features as a priority in the Mar-

rakech discussions will assist in assessing the effects of recent climate impact trends on agricultural production in Africa and to promote the use of such information to inform decision makers on investment priorities.

The discussions will promote the best possible use of the opportunities brought about by climate change, in a bid to adapt African agriculture to climate variability and change and to raise the agricultural performance with the ultimate goal of ensuring that Africa feeds itself.

At Marrakech, the possibilities to provide timely climate information to end-users, especially to the local farmer, the ways and means to reduce the current divide between rural and urban areas, the strengthening of links throughout the agricultural value chain and the impact of migration on food production and security will be studied with deftness.

The CCDA, which is convened for the first time outside Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, provides a unique space for stakeholders to come together and discuss the interrelationships between climate change and development, with Africa as the main focus.

The previous edition of CCDA (CCDAIII), which was held in Addis Ababa, in October 2013 on the theme 'Africa on the Rise: Can the Opportunities from Climate Change Spring the Continent to Transformative Development?' has highlighted the urgency to mainstream climate change in development policy planning, programming and implementation.



"Give fresh insight into climate change stories"

By Sellina Sheena Nkowan

African journalists have been asked to change the climate change narrative from the angle of vulnerability, and instead offer the narrative for opportunities to the continent whose countries mostly rely on agriculture as a major economic activity.

During a media pre-event held ahead of the fourth Climate Change and Development for Africa (CCDAIV) conference which begins on October 8, 2014 in Marrakech, Morocco, Fatima Denton, the Director of UNECA African Climate Policy Center (ACPC) challenged the African journalists to bring fresh perspectives to their stories without necessarily sensationalizing them.

"We need to begin to tap from the opportunities that Climate Change presents especially in agriculture. Let's bring in a fresh perspective to the stories and climate change discussions," she told journalists drawn from different African countries.

Denton stressed that the media is an important part in the climate change discussion especially when it comes to communicating to the masses but, it needs to have the knowledge of the issues being discussed in order for it to report from an informed position.

Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) Secretary General Mithika Mwenda said that rather than looking at journalists as mere reporters there is need to look at them as partners in climate change debate.

One of the Africa Group of Negotiators, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, underscored the point that the media is an important tool which climate change experts and policy makers need to capitalise on.

Mpanu Mpanu said: "They know how to talk to communities, politicians and policy makers."

In his remarks, continental coordinator for Pan African Media Alliance for Climate Change (PAMACC) Isaiah Esipisu, said journalists face a lot of challenges in reporting climate change such as the ever-changing climate change language.

The fourth CCDA conference is being held under the theme: Africa can feed Africa now: Translating Climate Change knowledge into action.

The African risk management scheme can help combat climate change

By Emmanuel.K.Bensah Jr

Africa can easily cushion risks associated with climate change by making use of climate related risk management schemes, Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu, who sits on the African Risk Capacity Agency Governing Board has said.

“The African Risk Capacity is a real game changer,” Mpanu-Mpanu said in an interview on the eve of the fourth Climate Change and Development Conference (CCDA-IV) in Marrakech, Morocco.

The African Risk Capacity Agency is a specialized outfit of the AU established by a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in 2012 to help AU Member States improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters.

According to Mpanu-Mpanu, a member of the African Group of Negotiators, it functions as an insurance scheme that helps African countries pool resources together. He believes a system like this “makes perfect economic sense as coun-

tries deal with drought”. It further helps countries insure themselves against risk.

Once a request for assistance is approved by the Board, it takes around one hundred days for the money to be disbursed. This is unlike donor agencies, which often take between four and six months to disburse the funds.

Mpanu-Mpanu explained that one of the reasons why the agency is a game-changer is because it is about “changing the narrative” of African countries. It is also about understanding the risk-profile associated with climate change in the sense that when disaster strikes, a country will be well-covered, he said.

He gives an example of Mauritania, which suffered severe drought last year saying that the country would not have spent an excess of around one million dollars to address it.

The ARC is supported by DFID; SIDA; KFW (German Development Bank) and Rockefeller Foundation, among others.

Mpanu-Mpanu looks forward to the day when all fifty-four member countries will be covered by the ARC.

CSOs to interrogate climate smart agriculture at CCDA-IV

By Kofi Adu Domfeh

African civil society groups attending the Fourth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IV) will be interrogating climate smart agriculture as a subject that has evoked significant interest.

This year’s conference focuses on agriculture with the theme: “Africa can feed Africa now: translating climate knowledge into action”.

The agriculture sector accounts for the Africa’s largest share of GDP – to sustain food production, climate smart agriculture is being promoted to sustainably increase productivity, resilience and enhances achievement of national food security.

“Climate smart agriculture is the dominant issue because it is very emotive and evasive and we want to see as Africa what it means for the priority climate change discussions – that is adaptation,” stated Mithika Mwenda, Secretary General of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance.

In a Pre-CCDA-IV Civil Society Consultative Workshop, CSOs under the auspices of PACJA, have been sharing exchange ideas and discussing strategies on how to better support vulnerable African men and women, especially framing the

narrative of climate compatible development.

“We believe that African countries are doing their best in accordance with the Climate Change Convention to respond to climate change impacts. Such collective unities like Clim-Dev Africa, along our countries individual efforts are demonstrations that we even exceeded what it is for us to do”, said Mithika. “The CCDA and other spaces provide us opportunities to look back and see where we are and as the Civil Society, we will work with other stakeholders in such efforts as we believe this is the only way to defeat the challenges presented by the growing climate threats”.

The CCDA-IV holding in Marrakech, Morocco from 8-10 October 2014, is organised through a tripartite collaborative of the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as part of the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) programme.

According to Madam Olushola Olayide of the African Union Commission, the theme falls in line with the AU’s 2014 Year of Agriculture and the 10th anniversary of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

ClimDev-Africa calling for more investment in climate change research

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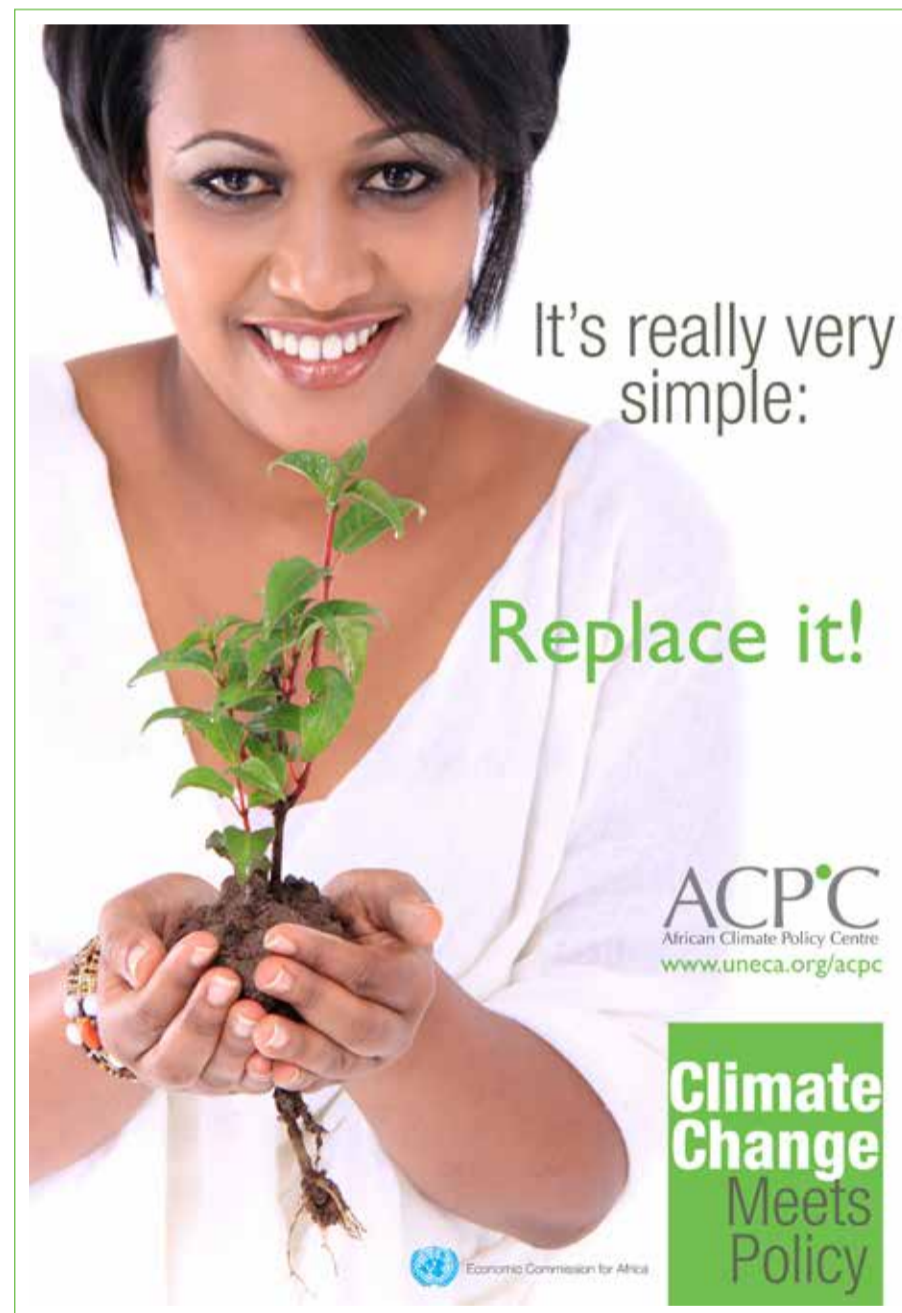
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