



# Africa Commission Climate Change Conference Bulletin

## A Summary Report of the Africa Commission Conference on Climate Change in Africa

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### SUMMARY OF THE THEMATIC CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Thematic Conference on Employment and Economic Growth: The Challenge of Climate Change took place at the Intercontinental Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya on 18 September 2008. The event was the fourth in a series of five thematic conferences initiated by the Danish Government's Africa Commission. These thematic conferences are focused on the educational challenge in Africa, women and employment in Africa, youth and employment, and creating economic growth. The conferences are being held between June and October 2008, in various cities in Africa.

The 18 September event featured plenary discussions and five working groups, which considered: water resources; food security and agricultural productivity; adaptation to climate change in urban areas; economic development and clean energy; and avoiding deforestation. Over 100 participants from the region attended the one-day meeting, including representatives from universities, research institutions, civil society, regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, governments and think tanks.

#### A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE AFRICA COMMISSION

The aims of the Danish Government's Africa Commission are to present new and creative strategies to revitalize and strengthen international development cooperation with Africa. The Commission, which held its first meeting in April 2008, will focus on economic growth, women's role in development, climate change and education.

In its final report, due in the first half of 2009, the Commission aims to propose a strategy on how to increase the effectiveness of international development assistance, especially with regards to youth and employment. The report will contain recommendations on how to reduce poverty, increase economic growth and promote local ownership. Working towards fulfilling the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is an underlying goal of the work of the Commission.

In drawing up its conclusions, the Commission will build on recent analyses of development assistance to Africa, assessments of the development framework and principles for its implementation, as well as on a continued dialogue with high-

level African and international experts. When the conclusions have been presented they will contribute to the framework for Danish development cooperation with Africa.

The Commission consists of international members drawn from Heads of States and Governments, politicians, experts, business people and representatives from international and regional organizations, as well as academia.

For a full briefing on the Africa Commission and recent initiatives and conferences on climate change in Africa, visit: <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/vol16/arc1601e.html>

#### REPORT OF THE THEMATIC CONFERENCE

##### OPENING PLENARY

On Thursday morning, 18 September, Betty Maina, Africa Commission member and Executive Director, Kenya Association of Manufactures, welcomed participants to the meeting. She underscored Africa's vulnerability to climate change and its corresponding implications for livelihoods, which are predominately based on agriculture, the most climate sensitive of all economic sectors. Noting the increasing awareness of the challenges of climate change for Africa's economic development, she highlighted the need to influence thinking regarding appropriate future development paths. Maina said that resources should be directed towards identifying practical measures that African governments can take to address climate change challenges.

Raila Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya, highlighted the relevance of the meeting towards addressing climate change in the context of job creation, where unemployment is the key impediment to economic development, and is exacerbated

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by climate change. He noted that 80% of electricity for manufacturing and economic growth in Kenya is generated by hydroelectric power, which is rainfall dependent. He also welcomed Kenyan and Danish cooperation to address climate change. Pointing to “complacency” which has resulted in the failure to mainstream climate change considerations into development planning, he called for a shift from the “comfort of good intentions” to implementation and the promotion of alternative strategies. He also raised the issue of limited funding as a constraint to developing key alternative energy sectors such as wind power.

Christian Friis Bach, Africa Commission member and International Director, DanChurchAid, drew attention to the



Christian Friis Bach, International Director, DanChurchAid

reality of climate change impacts in Africa, where agricultural yields are projected to decline by 50% in ten years, with resulting human displacement, loss of jobs and food insecurity. He discussed how climate change presents both obstacles and opportunities for the private sector in Africa highlighting, for example,

biodiesel produced from the *Jatropha* plant and wind turbine power generation as creative, viable alternatives and innovative strategies to save energy and create jobs.

Bach called for concrete and implementable recommendations with relevance to international development cooperation, addressing what should be done, how it should be done, and who should do it. He explained that the aim of the recommendations is to provide input for the Africa Commission in the context of economic growth, employment, youth and climate change.

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised issues relating to how the recommendations would be implemented and strategies for engaging local communities in Kenya, particularly women, with a view to building capacity to adapt to climate change. Responding to these issues, Prime Minister Odinga emphasized that women should not be considered separately in the context of climate change, emphasizing that awareness raising activities need to be implemented holistically. In response to a question concerning the objective of the conference, Maina explained that the Africa Commission is interested in practical actions that can be implemented at the local, national and regional levels, in order to provide employment opportunities



H.E. Ralla Odinga, Prime Minister, Kenya

for youth and to enhance economic growth in Africa. Bach listed four keys elements which had led to the success of Africa Commission activities in Africa: the composition of the Commission, the Commission’s focused theme, the broad ownership of the process and the concrete and detailed recommendations made during the thematic conferences.

## WORKING GROUPS

Five working groups convened in parallel sessions in the morning and afternoon. Each working group considered a different theme, within the overall theme of youth and employment in Africa. The themes considered were: water resources, food security and agricultural productivity, adaptation to climate change in urban areas, economic development and clean energy, and avoiding deforestation. All these themes were addressed in terms of what should be done, how it should be done, and who should do it. The groups’ outputs focused on three to five main recommendations with relevance for international development cooperation with Africa. These recommendations were subsequently presented to plenary in the late afternoon, after which a discussion ensued in response to the presentations.

This section of the report outlines the key issues raised in the working groups, including the discussions on each working group that took place subsequently in plenary.

### WORKING GROUP ONE – WATER RESOURCES:

This group, moderated by Frank Muramuzi, National Association of Professional Environmentalists, addressed water resources by considering five issues: integrating water resources management (IWRM) plans and other strategies to foster growth and employment, and accelerating their implementation; improving climate and water resources data collection and information handling and the role of regional organizations; how increasing investment in water storage infrastructure for multiple uses (such as drinking water, irrigation, drainage, and hydropower, including large dams), can contribute to growth and job creation; preventing increased competition and tension over scarce water and land resources; and the role of regional and river basin-wide collaboration in mitigating potential tensions and capitalizing on the potential for joint action. The role of national governments, the private sector, civil society, regional organizations, international organizations and donors was also considered.

Reporting back to the subsequent plenary, David Ajakaiye, African Economic Research Consortium, highlighted that the group had observed that rainwater harvesting was generally not incorporated in IWRM plans. He proposed that governments encourage household level harvesting through the provision of subsidies for installing rainwater tapping facilities, which would provide rainwater for irrigation and thereby increase food production, in addition to creating a new line of economic activities, such as the production of rainwater storage tanks.

On improving climate and water resources data collection, the lack of climate change data and water resource data sets was highlighted. The need for governments to incorporate data collection, analysis and dissemination in policy planning, improve accuracy in weather forecasting as well as establish meteorological stations and make data available in usable formats, was also highlighted.

On increasing investment in water storage infrastructure for multiple uses, including new large dams, the group suggested that the focus should not only be on large dams but should include other multiple use storage facilities. Scaling up public-private partnerships and enhancing donor support to increase investment was highlighted, since African governments are not in a position to provide adequate financial resources. The need for environmental impact assessments to be mandatory

and participatory was also proposed, along with enhancing the monitoring capacities of government authorities and implementing agencies.

Regarding the issue of preventing competition and tension over scarce water and land resources, Ajakaiye said the working group had proposed the formation of intergovernmental machinery in the context of regional waters, where they do not exist, to control and resolve tensions in conflict-prone areas. The establishment of comprehensive monitoring systems in conflict-prone areas by establishing early warning systems and designing strategies for tension management and conflict resolution was also highlighted.

On awareness raising, the group proposed introducing climate change modules at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and also using the media to highlight climate change in the same manner that HIV/AIDS had been brought to the public's attention.

**WORKING GROUP TWO – FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY:** This group, moderated by Andrew Temu, Sokoine University of Agriculture, addressed food security and agricultural productivity by considering four questions:

- what measures can African governments introduce to revitalize and encourage pro-poor agricultural development strategies given climate change constraints, including whether higher global food prices present an opportunity in the agricultural sector and the role that trade barriers or agricultural subsidies should play;
- what can be done to intensify farming systems and increase productivity and outputs using technological packages such as enhanced irrigation, under constraints imposed by climate change and ecosystems, and how water resource management systems could be improved;
- what practices and technologies could be developed to forge more climate-resilient agricultural systems, such as improved forecasting and dissemination, how information and communications (ICT) technology can be applied, the role of genetically-modified plants, and whether agricultural research and extension services could be improved; and
- what is the role of African governments, the private sector, civil society, regional organizations and donors?

Working group rapporteur, Charles Nhenachena, Council for Scientific & Industrial Research, presented the working group's recommendations to plenary. These recommendations included: elaborating plans to address climate change and implementing adaptation strategies; reviewing public expenditure; reviewing policies; revitalizing farmer education and information systems; and commercializing agriculture. On adaptation and coping strategies, suggestions included the need for increased funding for research and development from bilateral partners and involving African governments and the private sector in finding innovative ways of using harvested flood water.

In terms of public expenditure, Nhenachena reported that the main recommendation was for governments to allocate 10 percent of their annual budgets to agriculture and food security measures. He also noted the need for governments to invest in labor-intensive infrastructure to enhance agricultural productivity.

Regarding a review of policies, the working group emphasized that governments should design, enact and implement food security policies as well as invest in and develop industries that process agricultural commodities to promote youth employment. Issues of land-use planning, policy and planning in view of climate change should be addressed by African governments in conjunction with NGOs and civil society organizations.

Regarding revitalization of information systems and farmer education, the group proposed the introduction of youth farmer competitions to enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation activities at the grassroots level. The group also suggested that African governments reactivate farmer extension services and that innovative incubation systems targeting youth be created by the private sector.

On commercialization of agriculture, the group saw an opportunity for international organizations to invest in agribusinesses, private-public cooperation through the creation of value chains for agricultural produce, and government reform of agricultural policies.

**WORKING GROUP THREE – ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN URBAN AREAS:** This group, moderated by Rachel Nampinga Kakooza, Ecowatch Africa, considered adaptation to climate change in urban areas under four areas: what needs to be done in African urban conglomerations in order to facilitate effective adaptation to climate change and protect the poorest citizens; how urban communities and authorities can tackle adaptation challenges in ways that foster economic development and job creation; how early warning systems can be developed in the context of cross-border river systems; and the role of African governments, private sector, civil society, regional and international organizations and donors.

Grace Akumu, Climate Network Africa, the group's rapporteur, presented the outcomes of the group's deliberations to plenary. She explained that the group had made recommendations in the following areas: energy, water and sanitation, human settlements and infrastructure and transportation. With regards to energy, the group had proposed the formulation of energy policies in African countries where they are lacking or inadequate; the promotion of local energy solutions to energy shortages; adapting foreign technologies to local needs; the use of cost-effective technologies; and the promotion of alternative energies, especially in low-income areas.

Regarding water and sanitation, the group recommended: harvesting rain water; improving and expanding water distribution systems; the need for civil society organizations to sensitize communities on the efficient use of water; and increased support for ecological sanitation.

Regarding human settlements, the group recommended that local governments ensure proper enforcement of city planning regulations, decentralize local government functions to ease congestion in major cities, and upgrade informal settlements.

On infrastructure and transportation, the group proposed giving drainage systems higher priority in the national planning agendas; involving civil society organizations and youth groups in constructing and maintaining community roads to foster ownership and thus longevity; and improving existing rail, bridge and drainage systems.

#### WORKING GROUP FOUR – ECONOMIC

**DEVELOPMENT AND CLEAN ENERGY:** Moderated by Stephen Karekezi, African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPEN), this group addressed economic development and clean energy by considering several questions:

- what can African governments do to promote “low carbon development” in the energy sector and whether the “low carbon” path is an immediate priority;
- what are the constraints on generating power based on renewable sources of energy in Africa, and what employment opportunities exist in this sector;
- what is the future role of conventional fuel in Africa and what are possible measures to ensure energy effectiveness;
- how can energy-saving technologies be promoted in Africa and what are the employment-creation opportunities in this regard;
- what benefits can be derived from investing in the production of biofuels, and what constraints would need to be overcome;
- is trade in carbon emission reductions through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) an important source of investment, and if not, how can its relevance to Africa be enhanced; and
- what role should African governments, the private sector, civil society, regional and international organizations play in this area?

Presenting the group’s recommendations to plenary, Stephen Karekezi said four areas had been discussed: the rationale for clean energy in Africa, clean energy options, the provision of clean energy and potential providers. Karekezi highlighted advantages of clean energy, such as its ability to address energy supply shortages, reduce foreign exchange expenditure on energy imports, create new industries, create new jobs, and promote rural development.

In addressing the availability of clean energy options, Karekezi listed a number of alternative energies projects that are being implemented across Africa. These include, *inter alia*, wind power generation in Egypt, Morocco and South Africa, geothermal energy in Kenya, methane gas in Rwanda, and the use of coal-bed methane in Zimbabwe.

The working group suggested that governments deregulate small-scale clean energy systems to enable communities and businesses to establish their own tariffs; implement pre-determined standard feed-in tariffs in African countries; and operationalize CDM and carbon-financing instruments in Africa.

The group also proposed that African governments, energy regulators and small and medium-sized enterprises engage in implementing these recommendations.

#### WORKING GROUP FIVE – AVOIDING

**DEFORESTATION:** This group, moderated by William Lyakurwa, African Economic Research Consortium, considered the issue of avoiding deforestation, focusing on three main subjects: how African countries can participate in and develop schemes aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from degradation and deforestation, and the opportunities and constraints associated with reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD); principles and practices for promoting sustainable forest management (SFM) in Africa, replicating “good practices” for community

management; and the role of African governments, the private sector, civil society, regional organizations, international organizations and donors.

Working group rapporteur Alan Campbell, Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services, presented the outcomes of the group’s deliberations. Addressing the question of what should be done, he highlighted several issues. First, he noted that measures to be taken fall into two broad categories, namely, the conservation of standing forest resources and the restoration of forest resources and ecosystems, which means that both REDD and afforestation/reforestation need to be considered. Both of these are addressed under the UN Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC). Secondly, he observed that agriculture, forestry and other land-use activities must contribute to poverty reduction and help communities adapt to climate change. Thirdly, he was in favor of creating an enabling environment. This will require policy changes, more detailed and context-specific information on climate change impacts and policies, the need for African countries to communicate their interests better, and incentives for avoiding deforestation and bio-sequestration. And fourthly, he outlined support for innovative work and creating social safeguards to ensure that such activities do not harm local communities, but rather contribute to their development and adaptation goals.

On the issue of how such action should be undertaken, he discussed the availability of information, carbon trading, market reforms, funding and policies. On information availability, Campbell explained that the working group had highlighted strengthening existing institutions, the role of training organizations, and fast-tracking information to ensure African countries can develop common positions that inform negotiations during the UNFCCC’s fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in December 2009. He noted that the the group had acknowledged the role of carbon markets, but emphasized that the monetary gains by companies trading in these markets must be commensurate with the benefits derived by the communities, and that carbon-trading market reforms should ideally finance community participation. More funding was identified as being required to support capacity building and the piloting of innovative projects. The group also emphasized the abolition of practices in emission trading schemes that discriminate against agriculture, forestry and other land-use activities in Africa.

On the question of who should do what, the working group suggested that African governments implement sustainable forest resource use policies, in addition to enhancing the technical skills of African government delegations for effective participation in international negotiations. International organizations such as the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) were called on to improve the information database for Africa on climate change, and the need for the African Union to take responsibility for understanding opportunities and policy positions that are of common interest and that promote Africa’s cause was also noted. The working group also proposed that the donor community build institutional capacity, including research capacity, and provide financial support to innovate African institutions

**DISCUSSION:** In the subsequent plenary discussion on the working groups, one participant questioned how to communicate the meeting recommendations effectively to

policymakers. Another participant highlighted the lack of accuracy in forecasting weather, noting for example that modern techniques could not determine if there are going to be floods, and so many local communities rely on responses from insects and flowering plants to forecast weather. In response, Betty Maina acknowledged the challenge of scaling-up and merging modern and indigenous techniques.

Maina also pointed to various strategies for implementing the recommendations, calling on participants to disseminate the recommendations at the local level.

Participants also discussed early warning for floods events and better monitoring at weather stations, risk reduction and preparedness, good watershed management and the need for appropriate response mechanisms. Maina emphasized information sharing and data collection as well as the need for more integrated and specific information. Commenting on food security and agriculture activities, a participant observed that biofuel policies in northern countries had profound implications in Africa, resulting in escalating food prices and displacement of local communities.



Betty Maina, Executive Director, Kenya Association of Manufactures

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

In his closing remarks, Christian Friis Bach gave an overview of the meeting, which he said had produced concrete recommendations. Noting that the challenge of climate change had instilled a new sense of urgency coupled with the need to address poverty, he expressed hope that it would mobilize action.

Betty Maina thanked participants for their creative and constructive discussions. Emphasizing action at the national level, she said the aim was for the outcomes to have global significance. However, she added that the meeting had not focused sufficiently on creating employment opportunities for young people.

Ib Petersen, Danish State Secretary for Development Cooperation, emphasized the need to make the most effective use of opportunities presented by climate change and expressed appreciation for participants' commitment to the process, adding that it was crucial to solicit African views and solutions. Petersen highlighted the relevance of this discussion to the UNFCCC COP 15, which would be hosted by Denmark, underscoring the importance of African involvement in negotiations on a post-2012 framework. He informed participants that the meeting recommendations would be presented to the African Commission meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November 2008, as well as in other international fora.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35pm.



Ib Petersen, Danish State Secretary for Development Cooperation

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

### **UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD):**

This meeting will take place on 22 September 2008 at UN headquarters in New York, and is expected to result in a political declaration on Africa's development needs. For more information, contact: Internet: <http://www.un.org/ga/62meetings.shtml>

**HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:** This event will be held on 25 September 2008 in New York. It will seek to mobilize world leaders, major business leaders, civil society and religious leaders, the heads of foundations, and other stakeholders to agree on the practical steps that are needed to achieve the MDGs. The central objective of the event is to secure commitments for concrete initiatives that will translate pledges to support the MDGs into action on the ground. For more information, contact: Internet: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel>

### **AFRICA COMMISSION THEMATIC CONFERENCE ON CREATING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN AFRICA:**

This conference, the last in a series of five thematic conferences organized by the Africa Commission of the Danish Government, will be held on 30 October 2008 in Kampala, Uganda. It will bring together representatives of universities, research institutions, civil society (including youth and women's groups), relevant regional and international organizations, NGOs, the private sector (including representatives from unions and employers' associations), governments and think tanks. For more information, contact: The Africa Commission Secretariat; tel: +45-33-92-0390; e-mail: [africacommission@um.dk](mailto:africacommission@um.dk); Internet: <http://www.africacommission.um.dk/en/menu/Consultations/Conferences/Seminars.htm>

**FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL:** UNFCCC COP 14 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 4 are scheduled to take place from 1-12 December 2008 in Poznan, Poland. These meetings will coincide with the 29th meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); Internet: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc\\_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008](http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008)



L-R: Ib Petersen, Danish State Secretary for Development; Betty Maina, Executive Director, Kenya Association of Manufactures; and Christian Friis Bach, International Director, DanChurchAid, after the closing session.