

Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa and the European Union's Development Cooperation

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Africa is seen as a continent particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. Most African countries will most likely not achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and climate change is a factor increasingly undermining development efforts. At the same time, the European Union as a country group has been the second most important contributor to global climate change due to its high amount of cumulated emissions. Thus, it is particularly responsible for reducing its emissions, and at the same time, as a matter of equity, to assist affected countries with adapting to the consequences of climate change. The EU is also the most important donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) worldwide. The cooperation with its neighbouring continent Africa is supposed to reach a new level with the Joint EU-Africa Strategy. This paper summarises the findings concerning several aspects of adaptation to climate change in Africa, which are presented in a background paper prepared by Germanwatch.² In addition, it shows how this is being reflected within the EU development cooperation. Finally, it provides conclusions and recommendations on how the EU could contribute to effectively foster adaptation in Africa.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) draws a number of conclusions in its Africa chapter, with a very high scientific certainty level.³ These include that a) Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change and climate variability; b) agricultural production and food security (including access to food) in many African countries and regions will likely be severely compromised by climate change and climate variability; c) climate change will aggravate the water stress currently faced by some countries while several countries, which are currently not at risk, will have to cope with increasing water stress; and d) human health, already compromised by a range of factors, could further be negatively impacted by climate change and climate variability (e.g. malaria in Southern Africa and the Eastern African highlands). Finally, the impacts of climate change are feared to increasingly contribute to conflicts, and different African regions will very likely face significant conflict risks due to climate change.⁴

2. ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

The need for adaptive responses to the challenge of climate variability and climate change increasingly gains attention

from policy-makers, development practitioners and affected stakeholders. According to the IPCC, "the covariant mix of climate stresses and other factors in Africa means that for many in Africa adaptation is not an option, but a necessary compulsion".⁵ However, sustainable poverty reduction still remains a crucial development challenge. Through reducing vulnerability, it can also contribute to increasing the adaptive capacity of people. Research shows that adaptation strategies can bring about synergies with efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁶ This is very important in order to develop integrated strategies of "adaptive development".

Strategies of already observed adaptation include diversification of livelihood activities, institutional architecture, adjustments in farming operations, income-generation projects and selling of labour. However, the IPCC underlines that "African farmers have developed several adaptation options to cope with current climate variability but such adaptations may not be sufficient for future changes of climate".⁷ This leads to two conclusions: First, it is necessary to limit global warming as much as possible by globally reducing greenhouse gas emissions, in order to prevent dangerous climate change and to avoid the incidence of large-scale risks such as the so-called "tipping elements". Second, it requires substantially increased efforts to reduce the general vulnerability of people as well as planned adaptation on different scales and levels. Fortunately, an increasing number of research and implementation activities are taking place in different parts of the African continent to better understand the issue of adaptation, to define priorities and to test approaches.

ADAPTATION PRIORITIES AND KEY CONSTRAINTS

Climate change leaves Africa with an additional development and financial burden to which it has only contributed very little. However, in most cases effective and successful adaptation requires investments, e.g. for capacity building, "climate-proofing" infrastructure or other strategies. Although no clear figures are available, there is no doubt that the costs of adaptation will be significant in all its dimensions and will very likely overstrain most countries' capacities. Financing thus must be seen as a key constraint for successful adaptation on a broader scale. Priority fields of action include improvements in systematic observation of climate variability and climate change, impact and vulnerability

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² The full background paper including the list of references can be downloaded at: <http://www.germanwatch.org/klima/euaf07.htm>

³ Boko et al. 2007

⁴ German Advisory Council for Global Environmental Change (WBGU) 2007

⁵ Boko et al. 2007: 452

⁶ Columbia University 2006

⁷ Boko et al. 2007: 435

assessments on different scales, and adaptation planning and implementation in different vulnerable sectors (agriculture, water, ecosystems, energy, tourism) and in cross-sectoral approaches.⁸ Those communities particularly affected should be given high priority when developing pilot projects. It is important to note that "incorporating indigenous knowledge into climate change policies can lead to the development of effective adaptation strategies that are cost-effective, participatory, and sustainable".⁹

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND COSTS: THE NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES OF ACTION (NAPAs)

An important process for the development of at least short-term adaptation strategies are the "National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)". Least Developed Countries (LDCs) receive support from the UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to elaborate such programmes in a participatory manner. By August 2007, NAPAs from 12 African LDCs were available on the website of the UNFCCC secretariat.¹⁰ Other African countries are expected to finalize their NAPAs until the end of 2007. The countries are supposed to identify the most urgent adaptation needs and projects, usually of two to three years duration. Thus, the NAPAs can only be seen as a first starting point to developing comprehensive adaptation strategies. This also holds for the question of the financial scale of adaptation needs in Africa. Up to now, no comprehensive assessments do exist. Some studies try to calculate the costs of climate change for particular problems in certain regions.¹¹ A rough cost estimate for the short-term adaptation costs, probably at the lower end of the range, can be derived from scaling up the existing NAPAs to the level of all African LDCs. This would sum up to a financial demand of between USD 354 and 701 million. For entire Sub-Saharan Africa, the estimations result in expenses of USD 665 to 1,267 million.

ADAPTATION OPTION INSURANCE INSTRUMENTS

With the advent of novel mechanisms for pricing and transferring catastrophe risks to the global financial markets, insurance instruments have emerged as a promising opportunity for developing countries in their concurrent efforts to reduce poverty and adapt to climate change. Donor-supported schemes are already demonstrating their potential to provide safety nets against the economic losses from climate-related and other extremes in developing countries. But scaling up these promising schemes will prove costly, especially since disaster risks, unlike health or accident, affect whole regions at the same time and thus require reinsurance or spatial diversification – both out of reach for most local insurers. Moreover, LDCs can hardly afford the technical analyses and other start-up costs for insurance systems. In sum, the market alone will not provide these climate insurance instruments. International co-financing, e.g. for technical analysis or reinsurance is a precondition for rapid scaling up. The

support of an "African Climate Insurance Facility" mainly to support micro-insurance, which has entered the agenda of the "G8 Gleneagles Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development", would be timely.

3. ADAPTATION IN THE EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH AFRICA

During the last years, adaptation to climate change has increasingly gained "policy profile" in the EU development cooperation: from the Commission's communication "Climate Change in the Context of Development Cooperation" (2003) to the successive Action Plan adopted in 2004, from the "12 Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) commitments" of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) (2005) to the Commission's recent communication "From Cairo to Lisbon – The EU-Africa Strategic partnership" (2007). The OECD "Declaration on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Co-Operation" (2006) is also important in this regard. In addition, African policy-makers refer to this challenge more frequently than before, for example in the "Joint ACP-EU Declaration on Climate Change and Development" (2006) or in the "Addis Abeba Declaration on Climate Change and Development in Africa" (2007) adopted by the African Union (AU). The AU also underlines the responsibility of industrialised countries to reduce their emissions, to limit the negative development impacts of climate change.

PRESENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ADAPTATION IN AFRICA

The EU is the primary contributor to the UNFCCC funds that are relevant for adaptation, the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the LDCF. The EU countries are responsible for more than 80 percent of the pledges for both funds (USD 41 million for the SCCF and USD 100 million for the LDCF). However, the available financing is still only a fraction of the adaptation needs, even if only the short-term costs, as identified in the NAPAs, are referred to. The contributions of different Member States differ significantly in absolute terms and compared to their responsibility for global warming.¹² Some member states have a significantly higher share of the EU's contributions to the fund than their responsibility – especially Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands – while others contribute significantly less (France, Italy, Spain). Belgium and Austria belong to a number of countries which have so far not made any pledges to the funds. The UNFCCC funds contain no specific earmarking for Africa. However, non-African regions appear much more prominently in the project pipeline.¹³ In addition to this funding, some Member States have set up programmes to assist adaptation to climate change in certain African countries, which vary significantly by size and geographic scope and are usually calculated into ODA commitments.

⁸ UNFCCC 2007

⁹ Boko et al. 2007

¹⁰ <http://unfccc.int/adaptation/napas/items/2679.php>

¹¹ see Boko et al. 2007

¹² The Oxfam Adaptation Financing Index is applied for this purpose, see also Oxfam 2007

¹³ GEF 2006

INTEGRATION OF ADAPTATION INTO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

To achieve systematic integration of adaptation into development cooperation, there is still a long way to go. The OECD concluded in a recent report that "much of the progress thus far, however, has been at the level of high-level policy declarations, or efforts initiated by climate specialists in the headquarters of certain donor agencies and IFIs. Actual implementation (via pilot projects) is still at an early stage, or absent altogether."¹⁴ The scientific progress on adaptation strategies achieved in the last years will hopefully facilitate the integration process, although there is still a huge lack of experience of how to cope with climatic changes in the future. Institutional constraints have to be overcome. The European Commission also regards a lack of operational guidelines and human resources in development agencies as an important impediment.¹⁵

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of conclusions and recommendations emerge from the analysis. Their implementation could hopefully further support the joint development and implementation of adaptation strategies, policies and projects in Africa. Some of these suggestions could create additional dynamics on the way for a strong UNFCCC negotiation mandate being adopted in Bali in December 2007.

REVIEW AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE EU ACTION PLAN ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The EU Action Plan, adopted in 2004, is an important guiding framework for how adaptation to climate change is being addressed in the development cooperation of the EU. It is about to be reviewed in late 2007 and during 2008. The review should reflect the latest scientific results indicating an increasing sense of urgency to take action on climate change, it should be transparent and comprehensive and actively encourage the civil society in both the EU and target countries to participate.¹⁶ The European Commission itself has recognized the need for strengthening certain aspects of the Action Plan as part of the review, inter alia strengthening timeframes and responsibilities, a better prioritisation and a clearer financial earmarking to implement the Action Plan. Given the process of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, an effective follow-up of the Action Plan will be important for the cooperation with Africa, since the draft strategy points to the fact that the more general framework of the strategy should be accompanied by specific action plans.¹⁷

IMPROVE COORDINATION AND DIVISION OF LABOUR

An improved coordination and division of labour between the EU Member States is an important challenge to increasing aid effectiveness. Since adaptation to climate change is a relatively new field of development cooperation, it offers

the opportunity for an effective division of labour "from the start on".¹⁸ This can be envisaged in different respects. For example, regional studies financed by one donor can significantly improve the knowledge base of a number of countries. The same holds for the support or setting-up of research centers. In this sense, the EU should seek to develop a clear strategy, together with its African partners, on how Africa can be assisted most effectively, based on an efficient division of labour. Due to the huge lack of knowledge, research is still of utmost importance, combined with pilot projects to gain experience, for example in community-based adaptation (CBA). In conclusion, the most affected communities have the most urgent need to adapt.

BUILD A POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH VULNERABLE COUNTRIES

In the draft outline of their Joint EU-Africa Strategy, both partners envisage closer cooperation in international policy fora.¹⁹ This could be of particular importance in the UNFCCC context, since both parties have an eminent interest in a new international climate change agreement. The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012, and presently intense negotiations on different levels are taking place to reach a mandate for serious negotiations in this year's UN climate conference which takes place in December in Bali. The EU has committed itself to initiating and implementing new emission reduction strategies with the objective to limit global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Countries vulnerable to climate change, inter alia those in Africa, have a strong interest in this objective, since climate destabilisation beyond that level increases the risks for vulnerable countries in the first place. Also, African countries face a serious development and financial challenge posed by climate change and very likely will only agree to a post-2012 agreement if it provides them with substantially increased financial resources, additional to existing ODA commitments. Furthermore, the insufficient negotiation capacities of many LDCs leave them in a weak position to strongly express their needs in the Group of 77. The establishment of a joint alliance between the EU and vulnerable countries, which has already been announced by the European Commission titled "Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)"²⁰, could become an important political impulse if managed well, including a strong focus on the target countries' interests. As there are huge capacity constraints, capacity support (financing of studies, translation, legal and economic staff etc.) is one precondition for a successful coalition with LDCs. The EU will also have to better respect positions of the LDCs, for example in the discussion about the governing of the Adaptation Fund of the Kyoto Protocol. Given the particular vulnerability of Africa, even a special fund, an Adaptation Fund for Africa, could be an idea worth to assess.²¹ The extension of the Adaptation Levy to other Kyoto mechanisms, not only the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), would structurally improve the financial fundament

¹⁴ Gigli/Agrawala 2007: 41

¹⁵ Le Grand 2007

¹⁶ VENRO 2007

¹⁷ European Union/African Union 2007

¹⁸ Mürle 2007

¹⁹ European Union/African Union 2007

²⁰ European Commission 2007

²¹ UNFCCC 2007

of the Adaptation Fund. Direct financial contributions will also be important, for example to finance NAPAs (see below). There is currently a strong focus on the emitters in the international policy arena, leaving the affected at risk of being neglected. In order to accelerate the building of an alliance with a view to move forward to the UNFCCC negotiations, initiatives such as a conference of vulnerable countries could be very helpful.

COMMIT TO INCREASED ADAPTATION FINANCING

Given the EU's responsibility as a causer of climate change, stepping forward with financially supporting the efforts of LDCs to adapt to climate change would set an important signal: It would show the LDCs that their needs are taken seriously and that their NAPA work is appreciated. Also, it would signalise other industrialised countries that the EU recognizes its responsibility for assistance and that it regards this support as a strategic investment in reaching an equitable post-2012 agreement. African LDCs could be substantially assisted in the implementation of the NAPAs they elaborated, and the need for division of labor could be recognised. For example, a "NAPA fast track initiative" could be set up, in which the Member States commit to financing the NAPA priority projects, according to the Member States' relationship to certain countries and the responsibility for climate change. Since climate change is an additional burden primarily produced by the industrialised countries, many civil society organisations argue that financial resources, additional to existing ODA commitments and to the "mainstreaming" of adaptation in development cooperation, are needed to finance adaptation. This claim is legitimate even if a clear distinction between adaptation and development costs in many cases will not be possible and even not desirable since integrated strategies are needed. Also the co-financing of an "African Climate Insurance Facility" would be a promising option. Innovative financing instruments, such as the auctioning of certificates in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), could be applied to generate financing, independently from national budgets and from other industrialised countries' decisions. This has been proposed inter alia by the European Commission.²²

INCREASE „MAINSTREAMING“ EFFORTS AND SHARE EXPERIENCE

The European Commission itself identifies the need for increased dialogue between agencies and partners at the country level as an important lesson of the past experience with the afore mentioned Action Plan. Only few Member States have started systematic integration of the issue. "Mainstreaming" should be taken better care of in the work of development agencies, and the sharing of experiences, tools and the coordination of activities should be improved.²³

IMPROVE COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The adaptation debate can not be seen isolated from other important development debates. This is especially true since the adaptive capacity of people is, inter alia, significantly affected by their livelihood prospects. Trade relations, globalisation, health policies etc. are all important factors, and progress in adaptation could be vitiated by detrimental development policies in other fields. This can even be the case in the EU mitigation policies, with regard to the critical role of agrofuels. Thus, the EU must also improve its coherence in all policies relevant for the development prospects of Africa.

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²² European Commission 2006

²³ Le Grand 2007