

Discussion Draft

Climate change, development, and migration: an African Diaspora perspective

Awil Mohamoud, Alpha Kaloga & Sönke Kreft



Brief Summary

This paper represents an input to sensitize Diaspora around issues of climate change and development. Diaspora communities can instigate policy change both in their old and new homelands. Especially in the fight against climate change, they can play a bridge function so that European and African countries play together their climate policy action.

In order to achieve this, the paper consists of three sections. The first part of the paper focuses on the specific vulnerability of the African continent and its interaction with challenges such as development and migration. The second part consists of an overview of relevant policy fora and opportunities to drive change. The third part concludes with proposing a step-wise approach to capacitate Diaspora communities as active change agents in the fight against climate change.

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Authors: Awil Mohamoud, Alpha Kaloga & Sönke Kreft;
with contribution of Dominic Sett & Gundula Haage

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Germanwatch e.V.

Office Bonn

Kaiserstr. 201

D-53113 Bonn

Phone +49 (0) 228 60492-0, Fax -19

Office Berlin

Stresemannstr. 72

D-10963 Berlin

Phone +49 (0) 30 2888 356-0, Fax -1

Internet: <http://www.germanwatch.org>

E-mail: info@germanwatch.org

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1 Introduction

Africa contributes to about 7 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions¹. Yet it remains highly vulnerable to the projected impact of climate change. Therefore the pitfalls of climate change could add to development and growth challenges that Africa faces and exacerbate its vulnerability in the future. Climate change will particularly affect the poorest and most excluded segments of society that already have the lowest capacity to respond to those effects. Climate change will also exacerbate inequalities in health and education, access to adequate food, clean water, sanitary, sustainable energy and scarce resources². Generally speaking, the ability of the continent of Africa to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change is significantly lower than in the rest of the world. Thus, if preventive actions are not taken to mitigate these effects, they could contribute to the reduction of arable land, worsen chronic hunger, and even lead to social unrest. These direct and indirect impacts of climate change could in turn trigger migration, especially among African states³.

This paper focuses on the role of the African Diaspora in assisting their country of origin in its fight against the adverse impacts of climate change. In order to combat climate change poor countries need to mobilize all resources (financial, institutional and human) on different fronts. Diaspora can play an important role in this context.

The role of Diaspora groups in development strategies, poverty reduction and economic growth has attracted considerable interest from policymakers in recent years but it is not yet clear to governments or development actors how they can best engage with the Diaspora community⁴. Diasporas are a potential source of skilled labour or expertise for their 'home' countries through return migration, including temporary or 'virtual' return. Migrants are ambassadors of their homeland in the host land but they are also ambassadors of the host land in their respective countries of origin. In undertaking this dual role, African Diaspora should be well informed about global issues that impact their countries of origin. Diaspora can act as a bridge between "North and South", by raising awareness in the host country about issues and increase the acceptance of the population for the assistance provided by their countries to the vulnerable countries. Diasporas may also bridge the transnational space and facilitate transnational cooperation.

First, this paper seeks to kick-start a debate on the interrelated issues of climate change, development and migration in order to increase the involvement of the African Diaspora and to strengthen their role and voice. The paper covers insights on the magnitude of environmental challenges that occur in Africa as a result of climate change today and in the future, shows the relevance for development processes and finally reflects on the issue of climate induced migration.

Second, the paper shows different policy processes that are relevant to address the multiple challenges that climate change processes trigger in different parts of Africa. The policy paper informs policy circles in development communities from both continents on the importance of main-

¹ Total greenhouse gas emissions excluding those from land use changes and forestry in 2010; Source: WRI Cait.

² IPCC (2007): Climate Change 2007. Impact, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report.

³ UNEP (2011): Livelihood Security. Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel.

⁴ DRC on Migration, Globalisation & Poverty (2009): Diaspora and Development: Building Transnational Partnerships.

streaming the nexus between climate change, development and migration in the post-2015 development agenda, but also in other areas such as the UNFCCC negotiations towards a 2015 agreement, the UNCCD zero-net land degradation programme or the Nansen Initiative.

Third, the paper contributes to defining the role of African Diaspora in discussions related to climate change more directly. The paper is part of a set of activities to initiate the first step: Involve Africans in Europe in the discussion on climate change issue, building on development cooperation debates on both continents, where Diaspora is already identified, as a strategic partner might build bridges between the continents. To this end, the paper highlights the importance of building a critical constituency at different levels that lobbies for the adoption of policy and practical changes at the local, national, and EU and AU level responsive to the mitigation of hazards of climate change on development and migration.

2 The nature of climate change in Africa

Climate change is one of the biggest long-term challenges to global development. It is predicted that Africa will be the hardest hit region in terms of catastrophic natural disasters⁵. The high vulnerability of the continent to the negative impact of climate change results from the fact that Africa as a whole has a high dependence on natural resources, poor infrastructure, pervasive poverty and weak institutional capacity to respond and mitigate environmental disasters effectively. In addition, the continent has a limited adaptive capacity, exacerbated by widespread poverty and the existing low levels of development⁶. In essence, Africa remains one of the most vulnerable areas of the world that will bear the brunt of climate change without having contributed to the causes of climate change. The order of impact is directly depending on the degree of avoided climate change (see table 1).

Summary of key risks of climate change in Africa

- Undernutrition, with its potential for life-long impacts on health and development and its associated increase in vulnerability to malaria and diarrheal diseases.
- Reduced crop productivity with strong adverse effects on regional, national and household food security
- Adverse effects on livestock linked to temperature rise and precipitation changes
- Changes in the incidence and geographic range of vector- and water-borne diseases due to changes in the mean and variability of temperature and precipitation
- Shifts in biome distribution and severe impacts on wildlife
- Degradation of coral reef results in loss of protective ecosystem and fishery stocks
- Stress on water resources currently facing significant strain from overexploitation and degradation and increased future demand

Source: 5th Assessment Report of the IPCC (2014).

The repercussions of climate change in Africa are, as observed so far, largely manifesting in changes in rainfall, accelerated deforestation and desertification⁷. In the past decades Africa has been experiencing unprecedented reductions in annual rainfall in many areas. According to the Fourth Assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2007, the impact of cli-

⁵ World Bank (2013): Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience.

⁶ Warming generally increases the spatial variability of precipitation, contributing to a reduction of rainfall in the subtropics and an increase at higher latitudes and in parts of the tropics (...). While warming is expected everywhere on Earth, the amount of projected warming generally increases from the tropics to the poles in the Northern Hemisphere. Climate models suggest a global warming of about 3°C and a sea level rise of about 68 cm by the year 2100 due to the CO₂ emission projected under the BusinessAsUsual (BAU) scenario. Globally, the rates of surface warming increased in the mid-1970s and the global land surface has been warming at about double the rate of ocean surface warming since then. Global mean surface temperatures continue to rise and with eleven of the last 12 years ranked among the 12 warmest years on record since 1850. See IPCC (2007), Chapter 11 – Regional Climate Projections.

⁷ World Bank (2013): Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience.

mate change in Africa is predicted to be greater in the Sahel belt as this part of the continent is likely to experience an estimated 10 percent decrease in annual rainfall by 2050.⁸ The assessment report also stated that by 2050, average temperatures in Africa are predicted to increase within a range of 1.5°C to 3°C, while continuing to further increase beyond this time. Annual and seasonal warming throughout the African continent is very likely to be above the predicted global mean, with drier subtropical regions warming more than the moister tropics⁹.

Table 1: Summary of climate impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa for different temperature level (Worldbank 2013b, p22)

| Risk/Impact | | Observed Vulnerability or Change | Around 1.5°C ^{b,c} (≈2030s ^a) | Around 2°C (≈2040s) | Around 3°C (≈2060s) | Around 4°C (≈2080s) |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Heat extreme^e (in the Southern Hemisphere summer) | Unusual heat extremes | Virtually absent | 20–25 percent of land | 45 percent of land | 70 percent of land | >85 percent of land |
| | Unprecedented heat extremes | Absent | <5 percent of land | 15 percent of land | 35 percent of land | >55 percent of land |
| Drought | | Increasing drought trends observed since 1950 | Increasing drought risk in southern, central, and West Africa, decrease in East Africa, but West and East African projections are uncertain | Likely risk of severe drought in southern and central Africa, increased risk in West Africa, decrease in east Africa but west and East African projections are uncertain | Likely risk of extreme drought in southern Africa and severe drought in central Africa, increased risk in West Africa, decrease in East Africa, but West and East African projections are uncertain | Likely risk of extreme drought in southern Africa and severe drought in central Africa, increased risk in West Africa, decrease in East Africa, but West and East African projections are uncertain |
| Aridity | | Increased drying | Little change expected | Area of hyper-arid and arid regions grows by 3 percent | | Area of hyper-arid and arid regions grows by 10 percent. Total arid and semi-arid area increases by 5 percent |
| Sea-level rise above present (1985–2005) | | About 21 cm to 2009 ^f | 30cm ^g -2040s 50cm-2070 70cm by 2080–2100 | 30cm-2040s 50cm-2070 70cm by 2080–2100 | 30cm-2040s 50cm-2060 90cm by 2080–2100 | 30cm-2040s 50cm-2060 105cm by 2080–2100 |

^a A more comprehensive table of impacts and risks for SSA is presented at the end of Chapter 3.

^b Refers to the global mean increase above pre-industrial temperatures.

^c Years indicate the decade during which warming levels are exceeded in a business-as-usual scenario exceeding 4°C by the 2080s.

^d Years indicate the decade during which warming levels are exceeded with a 50 percent or greater change (generally at the start of the decade) in a business-as-usual scenario (RCP8.5 scenario). Exceedance with a likely chance (>66 percent) generally occurs in the second half of the decade cited.

^e Mean heat extremes across climate model projections are given. Illustrative uncertainty range across the models (minimum to maximum) for 4°C warming are 70–100 percent for unusual extremes, and 30–100 percent for unprecedented extremes. The maximum frequency of heat extreme occurrence in both cases is close to 100 percent, as indicator values saturate at this level.

^f Above 1880 estimated global mean sea level.

^g Add 20 cm to get an approximate estimate above the pre-industrial sea level.

This will be devastating as scarcity in rainfall has already reduced the amount of land suitable for farming. As most people in Africa are still depending on rain-fed agriculture, crop yields are expected to fall up to 50 percent in some of the poorest African countries as early as 2020 as a result of climate change and climate variability¹⁰. Environmental degradation in certain areas in West Africa is increasing exacerbated by erratic rainfall. However, poverty coupled with increasing population pressure is seen to be the biggest single cause of degradation on the continent.¹¹ This development has already forced many farmers to increasingly cultivate marginal land, while once productive areas had to be abandoned by subsistence farmers and hence become barren. The negative impact of land degradation in Africa, regarding food production is evident with stagnating and declining yields leading to increasing levels of poverty. Though degradation is largely a consequence of direct human intervention, severe weather events such as recurring droughts have had a dramatic effect on the speed of land degradation. Climate change likely worsens these conditions¹². The grave problem of soil degradation largely caused by erosion, desertification and poor cultivation practices is undermining the only means on which African farmers and their families depend for their very survival. Since about 1950, an estimate of 65% of all agricultural land in Africa have undergone by soil degradation. UNEP has estimated that more than a quarter of the

⁸ IPCC (2007): Climate Change 2007. Impact, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report.

⁹ IPCC (2007): Summary for Policy Makers; Chapter 11 (Regional Climate Projections) & Chapter 9 (Africa).

¹⁰FAO (2009): The special challenge for Sub-Saharan Africa.

¹¹UNCCD (2013): A Stronger UNCCD for a Land-Degradation Neutral World.

¹²WMO (2005): Climate and Land Degradation.

African continent is at present in the process of becoming useless for cultivation due to degradation¹³. This is alarming since agriculture is the backbone of most African economics, accounting on average for more than a third of GDP and providing livelihoods for more than three-quarters of the workforce.

Additionally, there is accelerating deforestation and desertification in Africa which is considered to be one of the world’s most defining global environment problems and, once again, increased by climate change related impacts such as droughts¹⁴. Apart from that, it is also the primary cause of environmentally induced displacement in many areas in Africa. It is even estimated that the over 67 million people living in the Sahel region are already affected by and live with the effects and threats of desertification¹⁵. Desertification is a problem particularly occurring in Africa, as it is the driest of the world continents with 43% of its landmass being categorized as dry lands. The continent also includes hyper-arid areas and dry zones coverage is even at a range of 70%¹⁶. Besides this fact, it is even more alarming that 74 percent of its agricultural drylands are already seriously or moderately degraded. In the recent past, 25 percent of the African drylands have been further degraded. The deforestation processes have not only displaced a lot of peasant farmers but it has also been causing dangerous socio-economic consequences, which add to others such as increasing population pressure, social tensions, conflict and poverty. Other challenges from climate change include for example temperature rise, direct effects from extreme weather events or sea-level rise which put lowland situated, highly populated areas at risk, which can be especially observed in parts of Egypt and west African regions such as parts of Egypt or West Africa (see table 2).

Table 2: Key risks according to newest IPCC WG2 report (IPCC 2014, p27)

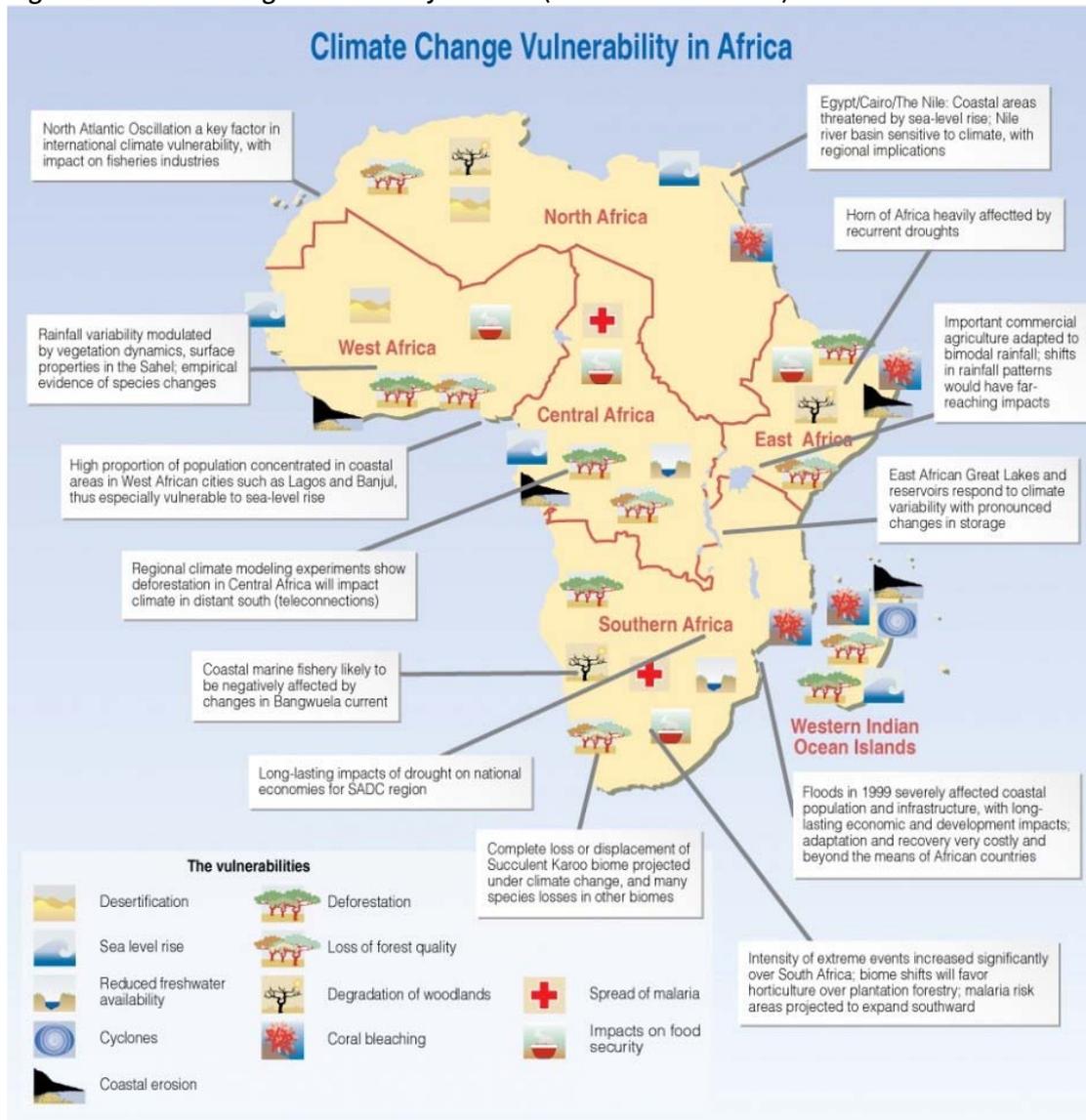
| Africa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|-----------------------|--|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|---------|----------------|--|--|-----------------------|----------------|--|--|-----------------------|-----|----------------|--|-----|----------------|--|
| Key risk | Adaptation issues & prospects | Climatic drivers | Timeframe | Risk & potential for adaptation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Compounded stress on water resources facing significant strain from overexploitation and degradation at present and increased demand in the future, with drought stress exacerbated in drought-prone regions of Africa (<i>high confidence</i>) [22.3-4] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing non-climate stressors on water resources Strengthening institutional capacities for demand management, groundwater assessment, integrated water-wastewater planning, and integrated land and water governance Sustainable urban development | | | <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Very low</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>Very high</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present</td> <td colspan="3">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Near-term (2030-2040)</td> <td colspan="3">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Long-term (2080-2100)</td> <td>2°C</td> <td colspan="2">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4°C</td> <td colspan="2">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> </table> | | Very low | Medium | Very high | Present | [Progress bar] | | | Near-term (2030-2040) | [Progress bar] | | | Long-term (2080-2100) | 2°C | [Progress bar] | | 4°C | [Progress bar] | |
| | | | | Very low | Medium | Very high | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Present | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Near-term (2030-2040) | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Long-term (2080-2100) | 2°C | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4°C | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reduced crop productivity associated with heat and drought stress, with strong adverse effects on regional, national, and household livelihood and food security, also given increased pest and disease damage and flood impacts on food system infrastructure (<i>high confidence</i>) [22.3-4] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological adaptation responses (e.g., stress-tolerant crop varieties, irrigation, enhanced observation systems) Enhancing smallholder access to credit and other critical production resources; Diversifying livelihoods Strengthening institutions at local, national, and regional levels to support agriculture (including early warning systems) and gender-oriented policy Agronomic adaptation responses (e.g., agroforestry, conservation agriculture) | | | <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Very low</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>Very high</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present</td> <td colspan="3">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Near-term (2030-2040)</td> <td colspan="3">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Long-term (2080-2100)</td> <td>2°C</td> <td colspan="2">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4°C</td> <td colspan="2">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> </table> | | Very low | Medium | Very high | Present | [Progress bar] | | | Near-term (2030-2040) | [Progress bar] | | | Long-term (2080-2100) | 2°C | [Progress bar] | | 4°C | [Progress bar] | |
| | | | | Very low | Medium | Very high | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Present | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Near-term (2030-2040) | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Long-term (2080-2100) | 2°C | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4°C | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Changes in the incidence and geographic range of vector- and water-borne diseases due to changes in the mean and variability of temperature and precipitation, particularly along the edges of their distribution (<i>medium confidence</i>) [22.3] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving development goals, particularly improved access to safe water and improved sanitation, and enhancement of public health functions such as surveillance Vulnerability mapping and early warning systems Coordination across sectors Sustainable urban development | | | <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Very low</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>Very high</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Present</td> <td colspan="3">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Near-term (2030-2040)</td> <td colspan="3">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Long-term (2080-2100)</td> <td>2°C</td> <td colspan="2">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4°C</td> <td colspan="2">[Progress bar]</td> </tr> </table> | | Very low | Medium | Very high | Present | [Progress bar] | | | Near-term (2030-2040) | [Progress bar] | | | Long-term (2080-2100) | 2°C | [Progress bar] | | 4°C | [Progress bar] | |
| | | | | Very low | Medium | Very high | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Present | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Near-term (2030-2040) | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Long-term (2080-2100) | 2°C | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4°C | [Progress bar] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

¹³UNCCD (2013): A Stronger UNCCD for a Land-Degradation Neutral World.

¹⁴ UNCCD (2012): Climate change and desertification.

¹⁵ Allen, K. & K. Ober (2008): Desertification and Sea-Level Rise: New Trends Causing Environmental Refugees in the Twenty First Century.

¹⁶ UNCCD, UNDP & UNEP (2009): Climate Change in the African Drylands: Options and Opportunities for Adaptation and Mitigation.

Figure 1: Climate Change Vulnerability in Africa (Source: UNEP GRIDA)

The adverse effects of climate change with their socio-economic consequences that Africa has been facing in the past and will face in the future in a more severe manner, are indeed complex as they are manifesting upon existing development challenges. Migration, in turn, can be a result of these stressors evoked by several challenges. In case of forced migration due to environmental shocks (flooding, droughts), migration risks to hinder development by increasing pressure on urban infrastructure and services, by undermining economic growth, increasing the risk of conflicts and social unrest and spreading health risks. Effectively addressing these challenges will not be easy due to the high affectedness and limited capacity of the continent to adapt to and mitigate the crisis.

However, while the negative impacts of climate change on Africa will be recognized in a number of areas, two aspects stand alone because of their wider and considerable repercussions; namely, development and migration. Both aspects will be discussed here briefly.

3 Climate change: Framing as a key development challenge for Africa

As climate change affects economies globally, it remains a key development challenge in the context of Africa. The adverse effects of climate change will negatively impact millions of poor people in Africa. It could also undermine and reverse much of the progress that has been achieved in the last two decades. This could result in retarding development and pushing more people below the poverty line. Recently, Africa has been recording remarkably solid economic growth. According to the World Bank's 2012/13 African Development Indicators, Africa has recorded an average growth rate of 5 percent over the past decade¹⁷. One has to note that there are very different factors behind this growth, including resource-based growth such as from fossil oil production, and that their human development benefits are partially debatable. It is imperative that economic growth is sustained and its positive impact on livelihoods ensured, while also made resilient to the vagaries of climate risks. This will require seeing climate change as a cross-cutting issue which needs to be integrated as a development priority in Africa. In doing so, it requires the realization that a stagnated or a reversed pace of development in Africa as a result of climate change will be disastrous. For instance climate change depicts a serious challenge to social and economic development, particularly because the economies of most African countries depend on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, water, fisheries, energy, tourism etc. Any future action to eradicate poverty or sustainable development growth should be 'climate proofed' with the flexibility and resources to ensure that communities can adapt to climate change and are protected against its impact.

This is particularly the case in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is the poorest region of the world and where **66.5** percent of its population live on less than two dollars a day¹⁸. Rapid population growth is one of the biggest obstacles in fighting extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. The health and educational system as well as the food situation are already under considerable strain. With more people having to be provided for in the following years the strain will increase. Africa has the highest population growth in the world, with an increase in population from 1.1 billion in 2014 to 2.4 billion in 2050 according to the latest World Population Data Sheet¹⁹.

In short, the development of the African economies could be undermined by the various observed and further projected impacts of climate change of physical and socio-economical nature. The first need is to adapt to these impacts. Furthermore, relying less on emission-intense fossil fuels (which have often been imported by African countries but which are causing local pollution) offers development opportunities for many people in Africa, for example through harnessing locally available sources of renewable energies. This is one of the reasons why climate change must be integrated into the post-2015 agenda, otherwise it may condemn many Africans to a life of poverty.

¹⁷ As measured by the real GDP. Source: World Bank (2013): Africa Development Indicators 2012/13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Population Reference Bureau (2013): World Population Data Sheet 2013.

4 Climate change and migration

Generally, climate change is expected to affect population movements within and across African borders. This is the result of factors such as increasing intensity of extreme weather events – especially droughts –, sea-level rise and acceleration of environmental degradation. In addition, climate change will have adverse consequences for livelihoods, public health, food security, and water availability. This in turn will impact on human mobility, likely leading to a substantial rise in the scale of migration and displacement in different parts of Africa. It is expected that climate change impacts on all forms of migration – internal or cross-border, short distance or long distance, temporary or permanent, and voluntary or forced.

Environmentally induced migration is by no means a new phenomenon, but climate change is expected to change its scale. It is obvious that any ‘push’ factor for migration created by climate change can be expected to interact with other causes or constraints to migration and these are likely context-specific. Long distance migration may lead to permanent exodus and is often favoured by and to those people, who already have relatives or acquaintances abroad, and as such consistently build a community of Diaspora.

Environmental shifts could cause people to leave affected areas but questions remain about where affected populations will migrate to and what factors may facilitate or hinder their migration. These questions need to be addressed by research institutions, as it is important to inform policies that help moving populations and that engage the Diaspora effectively in national strategies to fight climate change. Generally, it can be expected that elevated migration pressure induced by climate change might mainly come from rural areas, as people’s livelihoods there are generally more sensitive to climate change. However, because migration itself needs resources, climate change can also limit the ability to migrate. Not being able to move, or being trapped, could actually be an indication for greater vulnerability to climate change. Also, most population movements are occurring within countries and to a less extent regionally. Long distance migration in particular from developing to developed countries is certainly the exception.

Generally, a distinction between voluntary and forced migration is helpful. While in the case of weather extremes, forced migration is easily recognized; this tends to be short distance and non-permanent. In the case of gradual changes it might not be easy to distinguish. Actually, in early phases of deteriorating natural resources (accelerated through climate change), migration could be seen as desirable adaptation measure by affected communities to create more resilient family clusters that can better cope with climatic stressors. On the other hand, migration can also be a last resort measure that indicates eroding livelihoods.

Another challenge that the climate change and its associated migration can cause is the potential to induce conflict or exacerbate existing instability in certain conflict-prone areas of the continent. In short, the nexus between migration and conflict remains another layer of complexity in this regard that can aggravate the social stability in different parts of Africa, if the effects of climate change are not effectively understood nor addressed.

“Climate migrants” or “climate refugees”:

There is no established consensus on neither how to define nor how to term the phenomenon of climate induced migration and displacement. This is beyond a mere semantic debate but has bearing both operational and legally how governments and implementing organizations react to the challenge. The term “climate refugees” has gained traction especially in media reports, and the general public. Yet, the term ‘refugee’ is associated with a very specific legal meaning under the 1951 Refugee Convention, generally related to the fear of persecution. Environmental causes are not part of the Refugee Convention, and provide no grounds to grant refugee status yet. Given the complex result chains between climate change, and population movement, opening up the definition of ‘refugee’ at this would likely result in a lowered protection status of refugees worldwide.

That said, there is a clear need to better protect the migrants that have to leave their homelands as a result of environmental stressors. This is the agenda of the Nansen Initiative that will be introduced in the subsequent chapter.

5 Policy change coming? Opportunities to address climate change, development and migration issues in the coming years

5.1 *Climate change: Needed priority for the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (JAES)*

Africa and Europe are neighbours. Europe is Africa biggest trading partner and they are close development and security partners. Climate change and migration are two of eight themes in the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan that were adopted in Lisbon in 2007²⁰. This strategy, which is often referred to as a 'people-centred partnership', was launched with the purpose of scaling up political dialogue between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) in the interest of building a solid and sustainable continent-to-continent partnership based on shared values, interests, and strategic objectives. The goal of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is to reinvigorate and elevate cooperation between Africa and Europe in the fight against poverty, injustice, human rights violations, lawlessness, insecurity, and political and social instability. Furthermore, the Joint Strategy document clearly states that the implementation of the programme will be guided by the principle of "a broad-based and a wide-ranging people-centred partnership; Africa and the EU will empower non-state actors [such as the Diaspora] and create conditions to enable them to play an active role in development, democracy building, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes"²¹. Finally, the document explicitly stresses that both Africa and the EU will pursue and implement policies and programmes that help facilitate the active involvement of Diaspora and other migrant communities in the successful implementation of the strategy.²²

This message is timely since Diaspora is one of the contemporary global forces shaping the directions and trends of international development in the 21st century. This reality makes it imperative for governments to partner and join forces with them in development efforts in their respective homelands. Fortunately, the African Diaspora in Europe is now in a position to add value to advancement of the Partnership. The African Diasporas are, in fact, becoming increasingly involved in the development of their respective homelands on a larger scale and have successfully positioned themselves as critical development actors within development policy circles in Europe. In the past 10 years, many African Diaspora organisations in Europe have also been operating as critical development entities in their countries of origin. They have been involved in all kinds of development activities that often cut across both social services and financial sectors. For example, Diaspora-driven organisations have become active to varying degrees in community development, health, education, employment promotion, micro-entrepreneurship and business. Some are also involved in a broad range of development-related activities at the local, sub-national and national levels, such as policy development, advocacy, and awareness raising and conflict resolu-

²⁰ Council of the EU (2007): The South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan.

²¹ African Diaspora Policy Centre (2009): Participation of the Diaspora in the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. Background Paper.

²² For the full text of the Joint Africa- EU Strategic Partnership, see www.europaffrica.org.

tion. Consequently, the interaction of the Diaspora in homeland development has grown from simple to very complex and dense processes.

In short, this ever-growing involvement and visibility of the Diaspora in the development of the homelands has helped them to position themselves as critical development actors within development policy circles in Europe, Africa and beyond. In the same way as the Diasporas contribute to development, they can also contribute to the efforts of reducing negative effects of climate change.

The Partnership recognises climate change as an important phenomenon that requires specific policy attention within the Africa-EU cooperation framework in the foreseeable future. The Partnership therefore proposes the need to enhance policy dialogue on climate change challenges in Africa and Europe, in particular in view of the negotiations of a global and comprehensive global climate agreement²³. One of the key activities to translate this policy commitment into practical operations is the support to national/regional adaptation plans for climate change, and the implementation of ClimDev Africa, the Climate for Development Programme in Africa. ClimDev already resulted in the setup of the African Climate Policy Centre that provides climate information services to African countries. A related activity to this is the commitment to elaborate and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies, particularly in relation to water, energy, sanitation, health, environment, agriculture and food security issues.

However, climate change and migration are not discussed together in the Partnership, but as separate topics. This gives an impression as if climate does not have an influence on migration patterns.

This could be the reason that, although the Partnership highlights a number of potential partners that will participate in the efforts of addressing the challenges of climate change in Africa such as local authorities, civil society and the private sector among others, the African Diaspora is not specifically included. The African Diaspora is in an important position to contribute to the efforts geared towards mitigating the hazards of climate change in the same way they are contributing to poverty reduction and economic wellbeing of the people on the continent. In this regard, the Partnership could and should be a good instrument to facilitate the participation of the Diaspora in the process of addressing climate change challenges.

5.2 Africa in the UN climate change negotiations towards a 2015 agreement

While the historic UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen could not deliver the long-awaited international legally-binding agreement, which would put the world onto a track to stay below 2°C and provide an adequate framework for supporting adaptation, more and more African countries have also stepped up their action on climate change. They have brought in proposals for Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) into the UNFCCC process, have advanced their national adaptation planning and have become more outspoken in this policy process. Both through the African Group and the Group of Least Developed Countries, African policymakers aim to influence the UNFCCC negotiations, often facing capacity and resource constraints.

Through the African Conference of the Parties, the Climate Summit from Durban in 2011, a process towards negotiating a comprehensive legally-binding agreement with commitments for all coun-

²³ See e.g. Harmeling, S. & C. Bals (2009): Adaptation to climate change - where do we go from Bali? An analysis of the COP13 and the key issues on the road to a new climate change treaty.

tries has been initiated. It aims to conclude an agreement in 2015 which should come in effect not later than 2020. Only focussing on a longer term framework is by no means sufficient and near-term action on mitigation and adaptation including the financial support by developed countries has to be stepped up immediately as negotiated under the same negotiation track. The UNFCCC process could potentially have significant impacts on the future development prospects of Africa. Focussing on providing solutions for the negative impacts of climate change, 'loss and damage' discussion under the UNFCCC feature the issue of migration.

The 2015 Climate Summit will take place in Paris. Complementary with the process on future development goals (currently referred to as the post 2015 development agenda), if achieving positive outcomes 2015 could become a turning point to change the course towards a more resilient and promising development. Africa's voice will be important in this context, both in Europe and on the international level.

5.3 Changing the development paradigm: Africa and the post-2015 discourse

The millennium development goals (MDGs) have been pivotal to rally development actors against a clear set of indicators that represent human development, to catalyze additional assistance and generally show a reference point to track progress in African countries. For instance, the MDGs are one strategic area of the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The millennium goals are set for the time frame until 2015. The UN system is currently developing a post-2015 development framework. While sustainability has been a subset of the MDGs (coincidentally, one of the area with the least progress), the last years have shown that sustainability crisis can halt or even revert development gains. Hence, the new development discourse needs to integrate sustainability dimension much better into development objectives. At the Rio Earth Summit in 2012 the international community therefore decided to embark on a political process that would define *sustainable development goals*. With the 68th UN General Assembly session in fall 2013 it was decided to bundle the sustainable development agenda, as well as the discussions around the successor of the millennium development goals. While the Millennium Development Goals predominantly focussed on the global south, it is clear that sustainable development goals will have to embrace universal objectives for both developed and developing countries.

If the political process is brought to a success, the Sustainable Development Goals will likely become the major normative framework for Africa that development actors will use in the time-frame 2015–2030. As the SDG process embrace a higher level of universality, the bridge and ambassador function of Diaspora communities will likely be even more important compared to the MDG process.

Curbing climate change will become a major theme of the SDGs, since climate change adversely impacts on development, and is one of the direst sustainability challenges.

5.4 Combating desertification: action towards zero-net land degradation

Two-thirds of the African continent is desert or dryland. The drylands are vital for agriculture and food production, however it is estimated that nearly three-fourths of it shows degradation in varying degrees. The region is affected by frequent and severe droughts, which have been particularly harsh during recent years in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. All African countries are Party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and most African countries have developed and submitted National Action Programmes (NAPs) under this process. The preparation of NAPs is a dynamic, continuous process and the status of each country is subject to change over time²⁴. In addition, to facilitate cooperation on issues related to land degradation, African countries have created five Sub-regional Action Programmes (SRAPs) and a Regional Action Programme (RAP).

By 2030 – and compared to present levels – the demand for food, energy and water will increase at least by 50%, 45% and 30% respectively²⁵. Meeting those demands would require 175 million to 220 million hectares of additional cropland²⁶. These needs will not be met unless the land is preserved. Poverty is largely rural and land is the main, if not the sole asset of those poor. If the world does not take bold action to protect, restore and manage land and soils sustainably, it will not alleviate rural poverty and hunger, ensure long-term food security or build resilience to drought and water stress.

In that regard, a target of Zero Net Land Degradation by 2030 has been set by the parties to UNCCD. As another two billion people will arrive at our planet over the next 30 years, the world must restore more land than we degrade.

Achieving Zero Net Land Degradation by 2030 will require the commitment, support and active investment of all public and private sectors, including all actors of the supply and value chain related to land use, as well as local and community stakeholders. Current and future generations will benefit from the return on investment in terms of gains in efficiency, resilience, and social inclusiveness. These four key actions can be taken by the international community to ensure progress on Zero Net Land Degradation²⁷:

- Include Zero Net Land Degradation as part of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Advance on a new legal instrument (such as a Protocol on Zero Net Land Degradation) to the UNCCD as a global policy and monitoring framework to focus efforts and empower the international community to act with the speed and scale required to address this crucial problem
- Establish an Intergovernmental Panel/Platform on Land and Soil as a credible and transparent global authority on scientific and technical knowledge on land and soil, including land degradation and desertification
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the “Economics of Land”.

²⁴ See UNCCD (2012): Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in Africa.

²⁵ UN (2012): Resilient people; Resilient planet; A future worth choosing. The report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability.

²⁶ McKinsey Global Institute (2011): Resource Revolution: Meeting the world's energy, materials, food, and water needs.

²⁷ UNCCD (2012): Zero Net Land Degradation. A Sustainable Development Goal for Rio+20. To secure the contribution of our planet's land and soil to sustainable development, including food security and poverty eradication.

5.5 Migration: The Nansen Initiative – Towards a “Protection Agenda” for people displaced across borders due to natural disasters and the adverse effects of climate change

The Nansen Initiative specifically focuses on the need to improve the protection of people displaced across national boundaries as a result of climatic events. More specifically it is defined as a “state-led consultative process to build consensus on a protection agenda”²⁸. The initiative is supported by several countries, among them Norway and Switzerland. Its immediate objectives are to build

- A common understanding of the issue, its dimensions and the challenges faced by relevant stakeholders;
- Good practices and tools for the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of natural disasters;
- Key principles on the three areas of inter-state/international cooperation; standards of protection of displaced people; and operational responses;
- Recommendations on the respective roles and responsibilities of relevant actors and stakeholders; and
- An action plan for follow-up²⁹

To achieve this, several regional consultations are done in 2013, 2014 and 2015, for instance in the Pacific region, in Eastern Africa or West Africa. This will be followed by a global consultation that aims to chart the fundamentals of a global protection agenda, including the aim to establish a multilateral way forward.

The Nansen Initiative was launched after the United Nations High Commission on Refugee (UNHCR) – the UN Refugee Agency – aimed to broaden its mandate to explicitly address climate induced migration. However, the attempt to focus on future protection challenges and to develop a legal approach for climate change induced migration specifically, did not find agreement among UNHCR member states in 2011³⁰. Following this failure to better protect environmentally displaced people internationally, the Nansen Initiative can be seen as an attempt to better prepare and establish an international consensus on this important subject.

²⁸ The Nansen Initiative: Towards a protection Agenda for Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Compare Hall, N. (2013): Moving Beyond its Mandate? UNHCR and Climate Change Displacement.

6 Conclusions, developing policy recommendations and next steps

6.1 Perspective – Need for change:

It is clear that climate change does not allow for a business as usual. The analysis in this paper illustrates that the adverse impacts of climate change are likely to hit Africa hardest – and even stronger if preventive measures are not undertaken beforehand. Africa will be particularly affected in terms of food security, sustainable water supply and extreme weather conditions such as floods, droughts and threats of desertification. These climate change impacts risk undermining the socio-economic development of the African continent and might in this combination foster migration. We conclude:

Mitigation and adaptation in the EU and in Africa:

Firstly, for the EU this means to reinvigorate its efforts to transition into a low carbon society as envisaged in the EU climate Roadmap towards 80% CO₂ reduction by 2050. The EU needs to become a leader in the UNFCCC climate negotiations again. The immediate step is to include an ambitious pledge for the year 2030. In this context the proposed 40% reduction by the EU Commission is woefully inadequate. Instead, it should be target a triad of climate, renewable energies and energy efficiency goals centring on a climate goal of at least 55% reduction compared to 1990 levels. This would ensure a cost-effective pathway towards the upper end of the 2050 objectives including a near decarbonisation of the energy system.

Secondly, African countries must take a proactive stand on mitigation and adaptation. While their overall contribution to global warming is still marginal, also compared to other developing countries, it is on a clear upward trajectory. Africa's countries have huge challenges to expand basic energy infrastructure for large parts of its population, which will be a major policy goal for the years to come. There should not be a false trade off between increasing energy access for the poor and reducing emission growth, especially since renewables already represent the most cost effective option in many parts of the continents, particularly compared to the prevalent diesel generators³¹. Moreover, African countries have to embark on actively making their communities and citizens more resilient towards climate change impacts. This include for instance to initiate a National Adaptation Planning Process, which has been developed under the UNFCCC framework. Eventually, there is the need to help African countries to design national policies that make adaptation and climate risk management a core component in the overall development agenda. Such development policies should address how to limit the process of climate change, to reduce the impact of climate change, to increase resilience and at the same time follow a pathway to reducing poverty and environmental degradation, leading to a truly sustainable development. Furthermore, policies should in particular focus on sustainable water resources, land, forest management, increased agricultural productivity, and conflict and migration issues.

³¹ IRENA (2013): Africa's Renewable Future. The Path to Sustainable Growth.

Building a cross continent constituency that drives policy change

Thirdly, the EU and Africa should strengthen their partnership around a joint climate change agenda. It will also require the development of programmes targeted to the realisations of the key aspects noted above that will collectively contribute to a constituency building process. Furthermore it will require the identification of clear strategies, entry points and strategic actors and organisations at which concrete activities and actions can be initiated. The Diaspora is a decisive community in this, since it can be both a bridge-builder and a change agent in its own sake. The following points picture a step-wise approach to systematically engage Diaspora communities on climate change issues and to build a cross continent constituency that drives policy change and action.

6.2 Engage Diaspora communities as active agents of change

The Diaspora community is in a special space. They provide an important bridge into their countries of origin, and they are a witness of the hardships of climate affected populations. Diaspora is also an important political constituency both in their countries of origin, and in their new homelands. Lastly, the Diaspora is an active force of its own, often organizing and providing help and support in solidarity for affected people once climate disasters strike. We suggest a step-wise approach to galvanize further action of Diaspora communities.

Awareness raising and empowerment of Diaspora communities:

Step 1 sensitization and empowerment of the Diaspora community on climate change issues

The starting observation is that the expected challenge of climate change on development and migration is not an aspect which is often discussed among the African Diaspora communities in Europe. The chief reasons are a lack of information, sufficient awareness and knowledge of the complexity of climate change, and its grave repercussions on development and migration. Additionally, the debate on climate change is largely waged by academia and higher policy circles that hardly seek the contribution of the Diaspora and civil society actors in the discussion. Therefore, one of the primary aims of this paper, which can be seen as a *staging point* for a broader policy discussion, is to inform, raise awareness and increase the understanding of the African Diaspora and civil society actors of the challenges that climate change could pose to issues of development and migration in Africa.

The above described realities therefore make it imperative to mobilise strategic stakeholders at different societal and policy levels. It is important to build up cross-cutting constituencies across both continents and beyond, aiming to strengthen the African position regarding the global debate on the projected impacts of climate change on its development and economic growth. The creation of a formidable constituency should also give voice to marginalized groups in Africa that bear the greatest brunt of climate change. So far the involvement of sub-national development actors in the dialogue, policy advice and practical operation geared towards adaptation and mitigation efforts on the consequences of climate change in Africa has been limited. As noted earlier, it is still a top-down approach pushed largely by national and multilateral actors and institutions. However, a top-down policy approach not bolstered or anchored by a bottom-up foundation will not effectively succeed. To link the three issues of climate change, development and migration we will therefore need to mobilize diverse stakeholders at the local and sub-national levels that can add tangible value to sustainable solutions to the hazards of climate.

Step 2 mapping policy input opportunities and bridge building options

Diaspora organisations need to be brought in the position to **strategically form alliances and partnerships** with local communities in the efforts geared toward building resilience to climate risk. They can also facilitate the setting up of a permanent monitoring team composed of representatives from Diaspora and civil society associations and activists in Africa that collectively oversee the unfolding dynamics of climate change on the continent and regularly bring these issues to the attention of decision-makers at local, national, regional, continental and global levels. Furthermore, the African Diaspora organizations in Europe can foster the establishment of an informal forum in which Diaspora and non-state institutions both in Africa and in Europe could establish viable contacts and networks, and share information, expertise, best practices and positive experiences regarding the adaptation to climate change. Eventually, the proactive participation of the Diasporas can contribute to the development of a mechanism through which the non-state actors can play a tangible role in the efforts of addressing the nexus between climate change, development and migration within the EU-Africa framework.

African Diaspora can contribute to **advancing the policy dialogue** between Africa and the EU on the nexus between climate change, development and migration within the Partnership framework. Diaspora could therefore enrich the discussions in the correlation of these areas from a perspective which is quite different from those advanced by the more established development policy circles. They can also identify and bring forward new issues of importance and thereby add breadth to the agenda. After all, Diasporas occupy a vital strategic position giving them a particular kind of world view intimately framed by socio-political realities across countries and continents. In this regard, the Partnership offers a window of opportunity for the African Diaspora in Europe to actively participate in policy dialogues on these important topics. It also provides feasible entry points at which Diaspora organisations can actively participate in the realisation of concrete objectives within the partnership framework.

In order to capacitate Diaspora communities to become an active voice in the debate, further identification of policy venues and opportunities is a required prerequisite.

Increasing the direct impact of Diasporas on climate change mitigation and adaptation

Step 3: Develop tools for Diaspora community to provide additional development, mitigation and adaptation outcomes

There is a **need to provide solutions for Diaspora communities to have direct impacts on mitigation and adaptation** benefits in their home countries. For instance the remittances sent by migrants already reduce poverty and alleviate the economic condition of communities threatened by the vagaries of climate change. Yet, the critical role played by the migrants on this aspect has not yet clearly articulated from the perspective of the Diaspora. In addition to sending remittances, Diasporas are also involved in all kinds of communal development projects on the ground, which have been helping local communities to adapt to climate change. Following this logic, there is clear case for steps to 1) ease of migration policy in the EU and other host countries also as a measure to increase adaptive capacity in affected countries; 2) built up of cost effective remittance transaction systems also as a contribution to climate adaptation and national funding systems like national remittance funds, as well as tax redemption for such transactions; 3) built up of investment channels targeted at Diaspora communities to actively invest into low carbon options in Africa and elsewhere.

Likewise, Diasporas can **transfer ideas, knowledge, know-how and valuable networks** and contacts to communities in Africa that will be mostly affected by the impacts of climate change could. This is important since many Diaspora organisations are involved in community projects

that are implemented in villages and rural areas and are particularly active in fragile, post-conflict countries where development assistance is most required. They are therefore responding to vital needs not covered by the programmes of the established development agencies since the needs of the poor and marginalised sections of society in the homelands are vast and extremely pressing. In short, Diasporas are already in the frontlines and on the ground with marginalized communities that could be the first hit by the vagaries of climate change. Diasporas are increasingly aware that they are now in a strategic position to facilitate the process of transnational activities and networks and act as development bridge-builders between the West and Africa. This strategic position particularly enables them to mobilise considerable resources (capital, knowledge and networks) for the development of the continent. Furthermore, as a result of inexpensive transportation and communications technology, Diasporas consider themselves to be at home and abroad at the same. Regular events, such as the UNFCCC conferences in Bonn, UNCCD meetings or events regarding the post-2015 process, provide an important opportunity to build up lasting and well-founded connections.

Step 4: Develop EU level policy asks to widen beneficial role of Diaspora in tackling climate change

Diaspora organisations can initiate **lobby and advocacy campaigns** in Europe and in Africa geared to informing and increasing public awareness of challenges of climate change to development and migration in Africa in the foreseeable future. They could also undertake campaigning activities through workshops, expert meetings and conferences aimed at mobilising wider stakeholders both in Europe and Africa and getting support in the efforts of addressing the nexus between climate change, development and migration in the context of Africa. This is important, as it is through lobby and advocacy activities that Diasporas are in a position to mobilize substantial financial resources, extensive transnational networks, powerful international forces, and political connections that span the globe, and through which they could make a difference to improve the situation in the homeland in many respects. Both in aspects related to increasing support for adaptation and mitigation, but also the mitigation of emissions in Europe itself, are justified and legitimate areas of action which are required as part of a comprehensive response.

First policy priority for Diaspora communities to take a bold stand is the adoption of the EU 2030 climate package, which will be a benchmark for other countries in the run-up to the Paris COP in 2015. A Climate Change Summit in New York in September 2014 will be a first opportunity for heads of states to reengage on the climate issue. Diaspora in Europe in tandem with Diaspora in the US and elsewhere need to create the expectations for leaders to come to this summit and present bold and additional pledges. In the EU this means to engage directly with Merkel from Germany, Hollande from France, and Cameron from the UK. In addition the Diaspora should approach decision makers of national policy processes in order to secure the necessary negotiation space for these countries, for instance the necessity to install adequate funding in national budgets to support work on climate change issues in developing countries.

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Germanwatch – Bonn Office

Kaiserstrasse 201
D-53113 Bonn, Germany
Ph.: +49 (0)228 / 60492-0
Fax: +49 (0)228 / 60492-19

Germanwatch – Berlin Office

Stresemannstr. 72
D-10963 Berlin, Germany
Ph.: +49 (0)30 / 2888 356-0
Fax: +49 (0)30 / 2888 356 -1

E-mail: info@germanwatch.org

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