

Fourth Conference on Climate Change
and Development in Africa

Marrakech, Morocco
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Conference summary and recommendations

1. Consistent with the spirit of the African Union's declaration of 2014 as the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security, and its Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, as well as the United Nations Climate Summit 2014 and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway) – and taking into account the need for adequate preparation for the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP20) in Lima – the African Development Bank (AfDB) initiative, Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa), organized the Fourth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-IV), which was held from 8 to 10 October 2014, in Marrakech, Morocco. The aim of the Conference was to create space for in-depth reflection on how Africa can tap into opportunities offered by climate change to ensure sustainable food production and better livelihoods.

2. The theme of the Conference was “Africa can feed Africa now: translating climate knowledge into action”. The Conference had four sub-themes:

- Sub-theme 1: Climate data, information and knowledge for agricultural production, water resources management and food security;
- Sub-theme 2: Agricultural opportunities for renewable energy development in Africa;
- Sub-theme 3: Enhancing Africa's capacity to mobilize and access climate finance and investment for a climate-resilient agricultural transformation;
- Sub-theme 4: Innovation, technology transfer and deployment to enhance agricultural transformation in a changing climate.

3. Fatima Denton, Director of the Special Initiatives Division of ECA, and Rajendra K. Pachauri, Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, set the stage for Conference deliberations. Ms. Denton introduced the theme for the Conference while noting it was critically important that, in terms of food insecurity, climate change represented both a challenge and an opportunity. She also noted that agriculture could be used as a catalyst for development if smart agricultural practices were implemented around the continent. This, however, would require improved climate information services and effective management of climate change as an indispensable component of good agricultural policy. For his part, Mr. Pachauri highlighted the key findings of the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report. He said the Report showed that Africa continued to be particularly vulnerable to climate change, which was already causing scarcity of water, reduction in agricultural yields and the spread of disease, particularly among smallholder farmers, whose production was already low.

4. Welcoming remarks and opening statements were delivered by Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA; Yacine Fal, AfDB Vice-President in charge of agriculture, water, human development, governance and natural resources; and Olushola Olayide, representing the African Union Commission. They all noted the challenge for Africa to improve its capacity to feed itself, and at the same time produce a surplus for export – which should be addressed through the transition from subsistence to business-oriented agriculture – while making climate change a central factor in that goal.

5. Hakima El Haite, representing the Minister for Energy and Mining, Morocco, officially opened the Conference. She described how land degradation, soil erosion and drought contributed to food insecurity in Africa, and said that a concerted effort to reclaim degraded land needed to be part of the effort to ensure that Africa could feed itself. She emphasized that the key to Africa's development would depend on progress in agriculture, citing examples of Moroccan success stories.

6. The Conference consisted of plenary and parallel sessions. A high-level dialogue was held to promote in-depth discussion of the theme by other experts, policymakers, civil society representatives and participants.

7. The high-level dialogue featured eminent figures, including Haidi Hasin, Minister of Energy and Mining, Morocco; Abdoulaye Baldé, Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Senegal; and Raphael Edou, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Reforestation, Benin. The question-and-answer component was moderated by Uduak Amimo of the Kenya Royal Media Services. The high-level panel deliberated on the following key questions in regard to agriculture and food security:

- (a) Why is there so much discussion but so little action regarding climate change?
- (b) Why is there a paradox that, although Africa has the land, it imports so much of its agricultural needs?
- (c) How can Africa balance divergent national and continental interests in agriculture?

8. There was a special plenary session to address the particular circumstances of the African small island developing States, taking into account the importance of marine resources in food security and socioeconomic development under the theme, "Food systems and marine resources – are African small island developing States ready to explore the blue economy?"

I. Sub-theme 1: Climate data, information and knowledge for agricultural production, water resources management and food security

9. Reliable, time-space appropriate climate data and information are critical for understanding the potential impacts of current and projected climate change on African agriculture, not only to improve agricultural performance and sustainability, but also to ensure that Africa can confidently feed itself. In addition, the appropriate packaging and translation of climate data into useful information – making it accessible to end users, especially smallholder farmers – can significantly contribute to the reduction of risks and uncertainties presented by a changing climate. This will also assist in better management of agricultural water resources, timely planting and harvesting, storage, processing and transportation to markets.

A. Key messages

10. Key messages on day 1 included the following:

(a) There is an urgent need to improve data quality by following the data flow structure of the Global Framework for Climate Services of the World Meteorological Organization;

(b) A paradigm shift from crisis and disaster management to risk management is needed. This would require more reliable and high-quality climate data, which are useful at the local level;

(c) There is a need to foster dialogue between data providers and end users to ensure a feedback loop that would inform new directions in improving data network, data translation and/or tailoring data into useful information for decision makers and practitioners.

B. Recommendations

11. The Conference recommended the following:

(a) Policymaking processes should involve climate experts and support the development of dedicated platforms;

(b) Further climate research through observational analysis and modelling should be carried out to understand the processes underpinning climate variability and changes over the Indian Ocean, the Sahel and the Sahara Desert;

(c) Indigenous knowledge of pastoralists and sedentary farmers should be integrated into climate risk management;

(d) Capacity at the grass-roots level should be enhanced through adaptation measures, such as village-level water harvesting;

(e) Response actions should take into consideration the nexus between natural resources, energy, agriculture and livelihoods;

(f) Climate information should be provided in a timely manner and at an appropriate scale for decision-making.

II. Sub-theme 2: Agricultural opportunities for renewable energy development in Africa

12. To attain food security and achieve transformative and sustainable development, Africa requires sufficient energy. Africa's energy needs can be adequately dealt with by promoting the development of clean and renewable energy. The need for energy mix in transitioning to a more sustainable energy sources for Africa was emphasized.

A. Key messages

13. Key messages included the following:

(a) The private sector has a key role to play, but Governments should provide an enabling investment environment, and ensure a mix of both renewable and non-green energies;

(b) Modernization of biomass is key to supplementing grid sources to target energy access in rural areas;

(c) Targeted delivery of affordable and sufficient energy is needed to transform agricultural value chains and agribusiness in rural areas;

(d) Investments in affordable energy sources should be linked to infrastructure in order to transform rural economies, create employment and improve livelihoods.

B. Recommendations

14. The Conference recommended the following:

(a) Public-private partnerships in co-investing in affordable energy sources, especially in rural areas, should be encouraged;

(b) Practical action should be taken to strengthen integrated policy formulation at the national level to provide necessary incentives and create platforms for engaging the different stakeholders;

(c) There should be a regional integration of existing frameworks (for example, ministerial bodies);

(d) To achieve energy efficiency, the supply side and demand side of energy resources management should be addressed, along with the climate-water-energy nexus;

(e) Policies, regulations and institutional frameworks should be harmonized in order to foster the development of the biofuel industry and research and development on lesser-known feed stocks, and to ensure the primacy of food security.

III. Sub-theme 3: Enhancing Africa's capacity to mobilize and access climate finance and investment for a climate-resilient agricultural transformation

15. Appropriate and enabling policies and strategies that access finance and increase investment are necessary conditions for enhancing the resilience of Africa's agriculture under a changing climate. Therefore, climate finance is one of the mechanisms to exploit climate change-related opportunities in adapting to and mitigating climate change. Strategies and incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and enhancing carbon stocks – such as clean development mechanisms, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+), and the Green Climate Fund – have emerged as key international financing mechanisms under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Africa's capacity to access climate funds and participate in carbon markets has been limited. Africa needs to strengthen its capacity to access and absorb funds available from external and internal sources and create an enabling environment for private sector investments.

A. Key messages

16. Key messages included the following:

(a) It is important to have a clear mechanism for quantifying climate funds, sharing information, ensuring predictability and providing simplified rules and procedures for accessing the funds;

(b) There is a need for transparent mechanisms to ensure that finance is being channelled effectively and is meeting the specific needs of key stakeholders, including researchers, smallholder farmers and communities;

(c) The African Risk Capacity Agency should play a vital role in changing the narrative around climate change responses in Africa and enable States to pool resources for ensuring early response, in order to build resilience to the impacts of climatic change;

(d) The Green Climate Fund should consider the “demand side” perspective – that is, climate finance must meet the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries when climate financing channels and disbursing funds are being designed.

B. Recommendations

17. The Conference recommended the following:

(a) There should be a window for accessing finance for agriculture under UNFCCC;

(b) Practitioners should have access to and work directly with the financial sector, governmental financial institutions, bankers and multilateral development banks;

(c) Research should be conducted that highlights the opportunities and constraints on agricultural commodity value chains to enhance private sector investments.

IV. Sub-theme 4: Innovation, technology transfer and deployment to enhance agricultural transformation in a changing climate

18. Technical, economic, social, cultural and traditional obstacles to improving people's livelihoods are quite common in many rural parts of Africa, due to direct dependence on subsistence agriculture. Indigenous knowledge alone cannot offer adequate resilience and readiness to deal with the complex problems facing the agricultural sector. Emerging issues such as climate change require complementary innovation, science-based technologies and supportive policies. Scientific advancements and innovation will be critical in transforming African agriculture. This sub-theme focused on how significant efforts that had been undertaken during the previous decade in developing drought-resistant, high-yielding, pest- and disease-resistant crop varieties, biotechnology and other agricultural technologies through public-private partnerships and international research institutions were contributing to improved productivity and food security in Africa.

19. The importance of harnessing local knowledge, development of improved varieties, information and communications technology, and market information was further emphasized.

A. Key messages

20. Key messages included the following:

(a) There is a need for an approach that includes rural communities and other stakeholders along the value chain;

(b) Innovations should take into account gender, and home-grown solutions should be encouraged to ensure effective interventions;

(c) Transforming visions to actions requires political will and appropriate institutions. Resources and mechanisms to implement that action should be provided in the short term as an investment for long-term intervention.

B. Recommendations

21. The Conference recommended the following:

(a) There should be access to appropriate technology and innovation that enhance implementation of priority actions and practices at all levels;

(b) Measures should be taken that enhance the sustainability of agricultural production systems that target crops, livestock and fisheries;

(c) Communication of research findings should be improved to enhance adoption of new technologies at all levels;

(d) Public-private partnerships should be encouraged to promote investments in the agricultural sector and create regulatory frameworks to protect farmers and consumers;

(e) Investment in information and communications technology research and development should be increased, as should capacity-building for transdisciplinary researchers.

V. Transformation towards a green economy and low-carbon development as Africa feeds itself

22. Green growth, an inclusive green economy and low-carbon development are important in accelerating economic growth while addressing persistent poverty, inequality and unemployment, and enhancing the production of natural resources. Countries need clear visions and strategies to foster the transition to green growth and inclusive green economies. A number of organizations and programmes are providing support to countries such as Kenya, Sierra Leone and Mozambique to help them make the transition to inclusive green economies and low-carbon development. These actors include AfDB, the United Nations Environment Programme, ECA, the Global Green Growth Institute, UNFCCC and the International Institute for Environment and Development. The main challenge is to ensure that an inclusive green economy is mainstreamed into national development frameworks. Another challenge is tracking the transition to an inclusive green economy, and ensuring that accurate data and information on the transition are collected and disseminated.

A. Key issues

23. Key issues included the following:

(a) It is important to harmonize and enhance understanding of the concepts of inclusive growth, green growth and inclusive green economy;

(b) There is a need to be effective in tracking and monitoring the transition to inclusive green economy, and thus the importance of tools and data collection for inclusive green economy monitoring and evaluation. Currently there is no single indicator to measure the progress on achieving an inclusive green economy. ECA is carrying out work on integrated assessment tools and methodologies for inclusive green economy. The International Institute for Environment and Development was also doing some work in this area in Ethiopia;

(c) Natural resources valuation is necessary to capture the economic value of these resources in national accounts.

A. Recommendations

24. The Conference recommended the following:

(a) Countries should be encouraged to identify their needs and develop or mainstream inclusive green economy strategies or principles into their development framework;

(b) The transition and contribution of inclusive green economy to structural transformation and development in general should be tracked.