



AMCOMET

Third Annual Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa – (CCDA-III), 21 – 23 October 2013

AMCOMET Side Event Concept Note

(22 October 2013; 16h - 17h30)

The Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology: a key role in the enhancement of climate services for development in Africa

Background:

The majority of the adverse effects of climate change are experienced in developing and least developed countries due to economic and social conditions. In Africa climate has a significant influence on the day-to-day activities of African communities. Most economic sectors such as agriculture transportation, energy, are extremely climate-sensitive. The health and water sectors and the distribution and transmission of certain diseases, such as malaria are also significantly linked. Africa's weak adaptive capacity almost guarantees that it will experience the ill-effects of climate change more dramatically due to its increased exposure and vulnerability.

According to the African Climate Policy Centre¹, many African governments “lack the knowledge of climate change and the decision making capacity to cope with the impacts.” Effective climate risk management requires major efforts toward enhancing the provision of climate information and services and integrating climate vulnerability into development policy planning. Researchers, scientists and practitioners must be able to translate the knowledge gained from climate science into a language that can be understood and used by policy makers.

Established in 2009 at the World Climate Conference-3, the *Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)* seeks to enable society to better manage the risks and opportunities arising from climate variability and change. GFCS will strengthen national, regional and global capabilities to generate climate information and products for enhanced decision-making; and facilitate coordination and collaboration between users and providers of climate information for the generation and use of tailored climate services.

Following the adoption of the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration in 2010, the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) was established as a joint initiative of the African Union and the WMO. AMCOMET provides the political support to advocate for strengthening of National Meteorological Services to enable them to provide weather and climate services critical to the national economic and social development.

The Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) developed under AMCOMET and subsequently endorsed by the African Union, positions weather and climate services as essential components in national and regional development frameworks in Africa and highlights the need for the implementation of a structured GFCS in Africa. As a key component of the implementation of GFCS in Africa, the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) provides a platform for the recognition and visibility of weather and climate services, building on the existing related programmes,

¹ ACPC, Climate Science, Information, and Services in Africa: Status, Gaps and Policy Implications, Working Paper 1, November 2011

in particular, the **ClimDev Africa Programme**² which aims to build a solid foundation for Africa in response to climate change.

Critical Gaps that need to be addressed:

NMHS Funding: National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) are the main providers of weather and climate services in Africa. Studies show that gaps associated with service provision in Africa are primarily a result of limited capacities of the NMHSs stemming mainly from low level funding. A World Bank survey of 13 NMHSs in Africa indicates that their annual budget is only .017% of total GDP on average compared to most developed countries at approximately .067% of GDP or greater. Africa invests only 25% of what its counterparts are investing in their NMHS.

Research Funding: Scientific research at the pan-African level is weak. Many NMHSs neither have research and development departments nor the necessary institutional arrangements to benefit from available skilled labor in climate research institutes and university laboratories. The low capacity has been identified as a barrier to progress in the understanding and use of climate information.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Africa, as a whole, has the weakest observation system with only one-eighth of the WMO required monitoring density. It does not have the necessary means to deliver weather and climate services nor a basis for good scientific output. Investment in a comprehensive observation network is needed to sufficiently support growth and sustainable development.

Relevance in the national and regional development agenda: In too many countries, there is a very low recognition of the role of NMHSs within the political decision-making arena. NMHSs need to be at the forefront contributing science-based climate information for development programmes, policy and planning.

Role of Policy Makers

Policy makers are the owners and the customers of enhanced weather and climate services in Africa. Policy makers must be the champions, both nationally and globally, to effectively support their country's efforts in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. AMCOMET brings the full backing of the ministers in charge of meteorology as a driving force for provision and use of weather and climate services in Africa. The expectation is that firm commitments, *especially at the ministerial level*, will be required to maintain appropriate national and sub-regional institutions. Mainstreaming and integrating climate issues into development activities, national development policies, planning and practice – across all sectors would ensure the long-term sustainability of investments, reduce the vulnerability of climate development activities and help ensure consistency between the needs of adaptation and poverty eradication.

How the Integrated African Strategy for Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) can make a difference

By strengthening the development, provision and application of climate services, the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) will support poverty alleviation, disaster risk management and sustainable development and greatly contribute to narrowing the gap between African decision makers and providers of weather and climate services. This can be done in particular by:

- building capacity of decision makers in the understanding and use of climate science and information for decision-making at all levels;
- fostering and strengthening cooperation between National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, Regional Climate Centers, Regional Economic Communities and institutions on matters of climate variability and climate change;
- investing in improving the capacities and competencies of NMHSs and regional climate centres;
- investing in research to support the development of more science based reliable and useful climate information; and
- availing funds to promote and strengthen the application of science and technology to climate data collection, analysis, generation of early warning information and timely communication.

² A joint initiative being implemented by the African Development Bank, African Union Commission, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, as an integrated programme which aims to build a solid foundation for Africa in response to climate change.