

## Intended Nationally Determined Contributions as a Means to Strengthening Africa's Engagement in International Climate Negotiations

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### Key Messages

- Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) are an important instrument through which African countries have clearly articulated their climate actions
- The key mitigation priorities for the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) should be energy, agriculture and forestry
- The key adaptation priorities for AGN should be agriculture, water and health
- More African countries' INDCs have higher costs for mitigation than for adaptation, hence necessitating a rethink of negotiation for balancing of climate finance between mitigation and adaptation

### Introduction

Countries will be meeting in Paris, France in December 2015 to agree on a new global climate 'protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force' to go into effect in the year 2020<sup>1</sup>. This will be a culmination of negotiations on a global climate agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol that formally began in the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) under the multilateral United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The new global climate agreement may for the first time include legal obligations for emerging, developing and least developed countries. This will implicitly have a profound impact on the international climate regime after this agreement. It is in this context that this policy brief seeks to analyse how African countries - which largely fall into the developing and least developed countries envision their engagement in this new climate regime through their submitted national commitments, and also identifies how these countries can strategically and constructively engage in this regime going forward.

### INDCs

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) have emerged as the building blocks for the new global climate agreement. The Durban Platform set the stage for as many countries as possible to contribute to addressing climate change through a universally applicable climate agreement<sup>2</sup>. Countries that are party to the UNFCCC have been encouraged to submit their national contributions in the form of INDCs, with 130 submissions thus far recorded in the UNFCCC online registry<sup>3</sup>. However, the legal form of the new climate agreement, as well as the character and place of the INDCs in the new agreement is yet to be agreed upon<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, the lack of detailed, clear guidelines on the development of INDCs has made it almost improbable to anticipate the scope that individual INDCs will adopt. Given their seemingly significant role in the upcoming global climate agreement

Forty three African countries had already submitted their INDCs by 01 October, 2015, to the UNFCCC.

## Key Findings

### a. Mitigation

The top mitigation priority sectors, as per the count of INDCs with these sectors, are – in descending order – energy, agriculture, forestry and waste management. These sectors are key for African countries since energy poverty is highest in the continent; agriculture is the main employment sector and key to food security; and waste management is a major resource use and health issue.

*Policy implication:* to focus on these sectors during negotiations especially in terms of means of implementation and setting up monitoring, review and verification systems.

### b. Adaptation

The top adaptation priority areas are, in descending order: agriculture, water, health and biodiversity. As aforementioned agriculture is a key economic sector in Africa; water scarcity is also a major issue since many African countries are water stressed; climate change threatens to exacerbate tropical diseases and epidemics; and biodiversity is important because most African economies are natural resource-based.

*Policy implication:* to link and strengthen existing linkages between these sectors with other related frameworks such as Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

### c. Linkage to Sustainable Development

There is strong linkage between sustainable development and climate action, with 38 of the INDCs analysed emphasising this linkage.

Surprisingly, only 9% of the INDCs indicated a linkage between their climate actions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

*Policy implication:* linkage to SDGs is critical to strengthening the implementation of climate actions within the context of sustainable development, especially given that the anticipated new global climate regime and the Post 2015 Development Agenda have the year 2030 as the horizon.

### d. National plans and programmes

All the INDCs analysed clearly identified plans and programmes already in place, or being planned for, on which to anchor their climate actions.

*Policy implications:* the national plans and strategies provide legal and institutional anchors on which to implement climate actions, as well as providing an important nationally-appropriate anchor for doing so.

### e. Loss and damage

Only 17% of the INDCs analysed made reference to loss and damage. Most of the African countries that made this reference were either island states, such as Madagascar, Mauritius and Comoros, or countries with coastlines prone to natural disasters.

*Policy implications:* Loss and damage may become an issue of major concern for African countries and they should increase their focus on negotiations for this issue and ensure that it is reflected in the Global Climate Agreement.

### d. Balance between mitigation and adaptation

Energy, transport/infrastructure, agriculture, land use, buildings/settlements and forestry were the cross-cutting sectors. Energy, transport/infrastructure, land use and forestry were skewed towards mitigation, although not by a significant margin.

*Policy implications:* it is important for African negotiators – and others as well – to keep in mind that any mechanisms and initiatives should reflect these overlaps between mitigation and adaptation, and should focus on enhancing synergies between mitigation and adaptation.

### Means of Implementation

All the INDCs analysed made conditional and unconditional mitigation and adaptation commitments. 33 of the 43 INDCs analysed (78%) provided costs for mitigation and/or adaptation and also other costs. Most of these INDCs were clearly detailed, with the costs matched to attendant actions. The costs were further disaggregated into conditional (those covered using domestic resources) and unconditional (those to be covered using external funding and support). The main funds referenced in these INDCs were the financial mechanisms under the UNFCCC, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund (AF). Other innovative sources of financing, such as from the private sector, were also identified in some of the INDCs.

*Policy implications:* African countries should ensure that adequate and predictable means of implementation (finance, technology transfer and capacity building) are clearly reflected in the new climate agreement, as well as explore other innovative sources of finance.

## Discussions

Results from analysing the African INDCs are instructive to Africa's engagement in negotiations and implementation of the Global Climate Agreement in 2015 in Paris. The key issues emergent from this analysis are:

### 1. Balancing climate finance

African countries have long advocated for more adaptation climate finance than mitigation finance. However, analysis from the INDCs indicates that more African countries required more resources for mitigation actions (58%) than for adaptation actions. This is a significant finding, one that mandates these countries to revisit their stance of mobilising for more adaptation finance than mitigation finance. This is because adaptation is more urgent for these countries as identified in Africa's position paper on the climate change negotiations.

A better strategy for the Africa Group ought to be sought to optimise mobilisation and access to climate finance in general, while taking into account the varying country priorities.

### 2. Strengthening linkage between climate action and sustainable development

The finding that most African countries have stressed the linkage between climate change and sustainable development underscores the historical precedence of this approach. African countries, through the African Group, should therefore continue to strive to strengthen this linkage. More importantly, while African countries' INDCs have highlighted this linkage, few of these countries went ahead and linked their climate actions to the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. This linkage should be given much more prominence so as to actualise climate action within the context of sustainable development.

### 3. Role of science, technology and innovation

Technology transfer and capacity building also emerged as major components of the means of implementation of most African countries' INDCs, especially in the conditional commitments. While there mechanisms under the UNFCCC to mobilise these resources, there will be need to explore ways of scaling up the mobilisation of these resources at the domestic level. African countries will therefore have to strengthen the role of science, technology and innovation if they are to realise their climate pledges as outlined in their INDCs. This means that these countries should not solely rely on technology transfer through mechanisms such as the Technology Mechanism under the UNFCCC.

Rather, African countries should explore platforms such as the Global Apollo Programme to tackle Climate Change, a ten year programme that commits any country that joins it to commit 0.02% of its GDP to research and development of clean and renewable energy.

### 4. Monitoring, Review and Verification

Monitoring, Review and Verification (MRV) systems will be critical to the successful implementation of the African countries' INDCs, as well as enable them to keep track of progress towards the same. The MRV systems should also focus on effective utilisation of climate finance; greenhouse gas emissions; and also adaptation actions.

### 5. Exploring other innovative platforms for climate action

Since the climate governance landscape has been changing, thanks to fragmentation, African countries will have to be more proactive and explore other avenues and platforms to enhance climate action.

For instance, many African countries are energy poor, with about two thirds of Africans without access to electricity. While this is a major challenge, it is also an invaluable opportunity. African countries can focus on investments in clean and renewable energy, and skip carbon-intensive fossil fuel energy systems. This is a smart thing to do since the cost of renewable such as wind and solar has been fall-

ing rapidly, and oil and coal are plagued with uncertainty, especially the latter. Having domestically produced clean, renewable energy would lead to energy security.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Analysis of 43 African countries' INDCs submitted to the UNFCCC indicates that the key priority mitigation sectors for African countries are, in descending order, energy, forestry, agriculture and waste management. In terms of mitigation, the key priority sectors are agriculture, water, health and biodiversity.

Furthermore, most of these INDCs indicate a strong linkage between climate action and sustainable development, but only few of these INDCs indicate or even elaborate the linkage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDs) framework.

### Key recommendations

1. These key priority mitigation and adaptation sectors should form the core of Africa's negotiating strategy for the Global Climate Agreement.
2. The focus of the African Group should seek mobilisation of climate finance without disaggregating mitigation and adaptation finance, and only do the latter after securing the scaled up climate finance
3. African countries should strengthen the linkage between their climate actions and SDGs, and seek how to enhance the synergies between these regimes. Greater focus should also be placed on strengthening the linkage between the Global Cli-

mate Agreement and other relevant regimes and frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and also global health. These countries should also leverage on international trade to spur their transition to low carbon, climate resilient economies through enhanced use of clean technologies.

4. African countries should explore and foster domestic / endogenous research and innovation on clean and renewable energies. Such initiatives already exist, such as the Climate Innovation Centre in Africa, although the scale of these initiatives is not commensurate with the climate challenges faced by African countries.

### Endnotes

1. decision 1/CP. 17
2. Ibid
3. <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx>
4. Bodansky and Rajamani. (2015)

### References

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