

# Climate Change Governance for Africa

## Introduction

Climate change is happening on a global scale and the impacts of extreme weather events, changing weather patterns and changes in the climatic system will be felt by all nations. Climate change has traditionally been regarded as an environmental issue, but due to its implications across a multitude of sectors, affecting agriculture and food security, infrastructure, transport, health, etc, **modern day governance response to the climate change phenomenon requires that we re-consider climate change as not just an environmental issue anymore, but as a development issue.**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCCC) which served as the credible, independent source of scientific information for the development of **the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and later the Kyoto Protocol is responsible for generating scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of the risk of human-induced climate**

**change; its potential impacts; and options for adaptation and mitigation.**

Indications in the draft text of the IPCC Fifth Assessment report are that little doubt remains of the human influence on climate change, concluding that it **is extremely likely human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.** Human influence has been detected in warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes. This poses a challenge to drastically reduce global carbon emissions (growing consensus is that at the very least reductions should be by as much as 50% by the middle of this century) and nations need to pull together in order to achieve **the UNFCCC ultimate goal of stabilizing global green house gas (GHG) emissions at level that does not cause dangerous human induced interference with the global climate system.**

## Evolution of Negotiations – Decisions Impacting Africa

### 2007 - COP 13 in Bali

- Bali Road Map- set ambitious goals for finalising the provisions of the post Kyoto Protocol (KP) period (beyond 2012) by COP15 to be held in Copenhagen.
- Parties called developing countries to voluntarily participate in emission reductions supported by finance, technology and capacity building in an MRV (monitored, reviewed and verifiable) manner

### 2009 - COP 15 in Copenhagen

- The COP acknowledged the scientific case for reducing emissions but lacked quantified and binding commitments from developed countries
- Developed countries promise to fund adaptation and mitigation, pledging – US\$30 billion between 2010 and 2012, and US\$100 billion per year from 2020. At least 50% of this would be reserved for Least Devel-

oped Countries (LDCs).

- Negotiations resulted in loss of trust in the principle of multilateralism – COP deal was brokered by China, SA, India, Brazil, USA only and excluded other Parties
- Parties removed 1.50C goal and 2050 goal of 80% GHGs and introduced 20C goal.

### 2010 – COP 16 - Cancun Agreement

- Gave political ‘acceptance’ to the Copenhagen accord by expanding the 3 page text to 30 pages
- Served as building blocks for a foundation for a new treaty post KP
- Agreed to limit emissions from deforestation-REDD+

- Agreed to implement national plans to adapt and technology transfer
- Agreed to discuss establishment of the Green Climate Fund
- Agreed on further operationalisation of institutions and mandates under the Convention
- Issue of GHG emissions remained politically unresolved

### 2011 – COP 17 in Durban

- Was the 3rd COP on African soil
- Agreed on a New Road Map – fulfilling process initiated in Bali by agreeing on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (Durban Platform)
- P) to draft text of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under

the convention applicable to ALL by 2015 and to be implemented in 2020

- Questions of what happens between 2013 and 2020 with regards to commitments and funding remain largely unresolved.

### 2012 – COP 18 in Doha

- Some developed countries committed to the Second stage of the Kyoto Protocol (2013 – 2020) reducing emissions by 18% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels.
- Agreed on status quo on KP to continue during the extension period (2013 – 2020)
- Canada, Russia, Japan and New Zealand opt out of the KP
- Programme of work for NAMAs to establish methodologies and the level of required financial, technology support and capacity building

## Governance at the COP

The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision making body of the UNFCCC which has 192 member states (Parties) and 3 observer states. Its mission is centred on finding a solution that is effective, fair and acceptable to all. Decision making under the UNFCCC is by consensus at the COP, which meets annually and is based on the principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)**, which recognises the differing capacities of Parties, particularly economic development needs of developing countries.

Negotiations at the COP can be a complex and arduous process as it is usually difficult to get consensus from all 192 Parties. Over the **21 years of COP meetings**, some countries have formed negotiating groups which usually meet a few days before UNFCCC conferences and often several times each day during conferences to coordinate negotiating positions. **African countries negotiate under the G77 and China (Developing Countries) group and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group.** A huge focus for Africa during negotiations is strengthening adaptation efforts by the Convention, particularly lobbying for **enhanced support for adaptation finance, technology support** and including the issue of establishing mechanisms to **address the current loss and damage from extreme climatic events.** Negotiations also generally try to address mandates and institutional arrangements under the Convention for: Mitigation; Adaptation; Finance, technology and capacity building; Economic instruments; Transparency of action and support; and Periodic review of the convention, its processes and mandates. An overview of the mandates and progress of work by institutions, mechanisms and arrange-

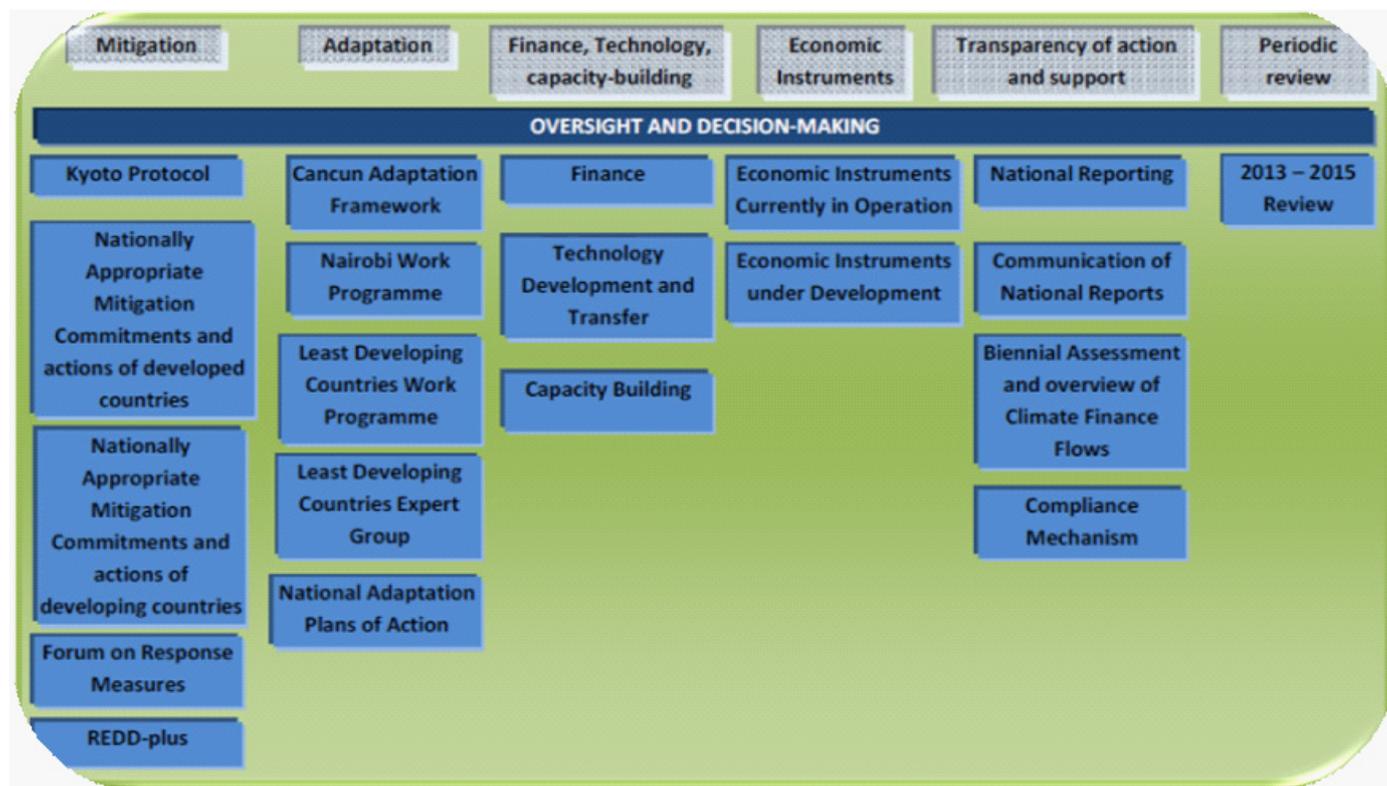
ments under the Convention are shown in image 1.

There are also negotiations under the **Kyoto Protocol (KP) of the UNFCCC, which was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005, and which commits Parties to reduce their carbon emissions based on agreed upon targets.** The first commitment period of the **KP ended in 2012 but was extended to 2020** to allow for continued emission reductions by Parties until a new agreement comes into effect in 2020.

African negotiators have over the years lobbied for a **“polluter pays principle”**, approach to reducing green house gas (GHG) emissions in order to achieve the conventions target of capping the global carbon emissions at 450 parts per million and global warming at a maximum of 20 degrees of pre-industrialisation levels. As per this principle, developed countries, who have largely contributed to the current high levels of global carbon emissions, are expected to take up emission reduction targets and set up measures to reduce their GHG emissions.

**Africa has largely accepted the responsibility to implement sustainable development practices and transformation of economic development pathways in order to keep emissions from economic activities at a minimum. This is mostly on condition that they receive financial, technological, research and development and capacity building support** from the developed countries. However, developed countries have persistently been arguing for emerging countries like China, India and Brazil that do not fall under developing countries and neither under

Image 1: UNFCCC institutions, mechanisms and arrangements



the developed countries' category, to also take up emission targets. South Africa arguably fits under this category as well.

**Given their own unique situation, each Party will bring to the table its own agenda, expectation and commitment during negotiations.**

To date, **mitigation pledges are not clear and are marred by conditionality.** There is no comparability of efforts, common accounting rules, methodologies and common base years which leaves more questions than answers. In addition, the implementation of **Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and voluntary GHG emission reductions** in Africa is subject to finance, technological support, capacity building and consequentially, only Mali and Ethiopia have progressed on this front.

### *The 2 degrees C goal?*

*A 2 degrees Celsius/Centigrade rise in global temperatures from pre-industrial levels is the highest rise we can afford if we want a 50% chance of avoiding the worst effects of climate change.*

Consensus under the Convention has been so elusive, particularly concerning the taking up of emissions targets, that a few countries such as **Canada and Japan have pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol.**

With the legitimacy of the UNFCCC at stake, COP 17, Durban set in motion the negotiation and development of a **new and all inclusive agreement to replace the KP.** The new agreement, whose form is not yet clear but expected to take the form of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention will include **GHG emissions targets for all countries, regardless of their level of economic development.** The UNFCCC has established the **Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action** to look into draft text for the new agreement, which should be ready for adoption in 2015 and enter into force in 2020. **Africa is pushing for this new agreement to uphold the principles of the Convention initially agreed upon in 1992 at the Rio Summit, which include principles of CBDR, equity, respective capabilities and historical emissions.**

Africa's socio-economic development imperative and response to climate change within a sustainable development regime is largely expected to be based on developed countries honouring their agreements under the UNFCCC to support climate change activities in developing countries by providing financial support for action on climate change, particularly for adaptation activities.

This is above and beyond any financial assistance they already provide to these countries.

For example, an outcome of **Agenda 21 established at the Rio Summit in 1992 was that developing countries will shoulder important environmental responsibilities and, in return, developed countries will take on serious commitments to help fund and support them in that process.** In particular, it proposes that **member governments of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would meet**

**their commitments to provide 0.7 per cent of their GDP for development assistance.** This was re-affirmed by governments in their **decision at COP 16, Cancun, to increase capacity-building support to developing countries** by strengthening relevant institutions, networks and climate change communication, education, training and public awareness at all levels, including increased sharing of information. However, the **absence of an international enforcement body has left promises made in most of these international agreements largely unfulfilled.**

## Additional Resources

### Website Resources

**Pan African Parliament (PAP)**– An organ of the African Union, to ensure the full participation of African peoples in governance, development and economic integration of the Continent. Has a permanent committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment which also covers issues of climate change for Africa. <http://www.pan-africanparliament.org/>

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**– For information on the COP, Kyoto Protocol and various issues, decisions and resources on climate change. <http://unfccc.int>

**International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)**–An independent non-profit and non-governmental public policy research organization. Is particularly useful during the COP meetings where they publish daily articles of proceedings, event analysis etc. <http://www.iisd.org/>

**Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)**–Provides technical advice to decision-makers in designing and delivering climate compatible development. <http://cdkn.org/>

**World Resources Institute (WRI)**–A global research organization that spans more than 50 countries. <http://www.wri.org/>

**Climate Action Network (CAN)**–A worldwide network of over 850 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in more than 90 countries working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. <http://www.climatenetwork.org/>

**Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**– the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. Established in 1998 to in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its function is to review and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

### Papers/ Publications

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