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Adaptation in Africa: the global failure to deliver on funding

Will Africa be steamrollered by climate change? The continent harbours 33 of the Least Developed Countries, is heavily reliant on agriculture and has limited economic resources to finance adaptation. Its geographic position and high sensitivity to climatic variability make it vulnerable. Large swathes of Africa already see more frequent and severe flooding and droughts, shrinking agricultural production, the spread of diseases and the rise of conflict over scarce resources. Meanwhile, African governments are poorly equipped to respond. Overcoming these challenges demands concerted international effort – yet a huge gap yawns between the global promises, and timely action on them.

Policy pointers

- **Climate change presents** a massive challenge to Africa – a continent where widespread poverty, hunger and disease already affect millions.
- **Global mitigation and** local adaptation are both imperative for Africa.
- **Existing commitments from** the international community are not always effective and deliveries are all too often slow and disproportional.
- **Holistic, integrated** responses and a shared vision are needed from the international community in helping Africa tackle its climate issues.
- **Commitments and** deliveries of new and additional support are needed from developed countries via effective, mandatory finance.

A region at risk

Africa is both a hotspot of human capital and ecological wealth, and a region at the mercy of climate change. Its water resources, biodiversity, agricultural systems, forestry and coasts, and the health of its people, all face immense pressures from current and future climate upheavals.

Much of this is already evident. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fourth Assessment Report says the cost of adaptation to climate change in Africa could be as much as 5 to 10 per cent of the entire continent's GDP. But Africa is poorly equipped to adapt, and international commitment to support the continent's countries in coping with climate change is justified.

What of mitigating climate change in Africa? While the continent has historically made little contribution to climate change globally, it will need to mitigate carbon emissions in parallel with development. So strong commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the international community will also be key to minimising climate impacts on Africa.

The challenges, and the solutions, are clear. And Africa's unenviable position at the sharp end of climate change, along with its socioeconomic vulnerabilities, have galvanised developed nations into generating a number of programmes and instruments to support the continent's beleaguered countries. But how well have they delivered on their promises?

First, a look at the array of climate measures focused on Africa reveals the range and size of these commitments.

Good intentions: the pledges and promises

The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol Developed countries party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol have agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and help in adaptation efforts via financial assistance and technology transfer.

Both the UNFCCC and Kyoto stipulate that developed countries offer assistance in meeting adaptation costs to developing countries party to them that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

The Bali Action Plan (BAP), which was agreed by UNFCCC parties, suggests taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of poorer countries that are particularly climate-vulnerable, especially the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The BAP also recommends tackling the needs of countries in Africa affected by drought, desertification and floods.

The G8 group of leading industrial nations – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – work together in accordance with their UNFCCC commitments to vulnerable countries. At a number of their summits,

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the group have reaffirmed their commitments to Africa. The 2008 G8 Declaration on Energy Security and Climate Change, for instance, recommits them to combating climate change with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities – so the highest emitters and the richest countries contribute the most.

The group also confronts the interconnected challenges of sustainable development, including human health, and energy and food security.

In 2005, G8 partners agreed to help developing countries obtain full benefits from the Global Climate Observation System (GCOS), a long-term operational system monitoring climate change. In doing so they recognised Africa as a special priority and agreed US$50 billion in aid uplift for the continent.

In 2006, the group adopted the St Petersburg Plan of Action. This enhances global energy security through a number of avenues, including reducing energy poverty and addressing climate change and sustainable development.

The G8 group also aims to achieve a reduction in global carbon emissions of at least 50 per cent by 2050.

EU The European Union (EU) has taken a leadership role in promoting international action to tackle climate change. It has agreed to cut at least 20 per cent of its greenhouse gas emissions and work towards a renewable-energy share of 20 per cent in its energy consumption by 2020. In 2007, the EU agreed to a global climate change alliance with the poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change.

The EU-Africa Partnership on Climate Change is meant to provide for dialogue, cooperation and exchange on concrete actions responding to climate change, and be an effective channel for discussing a shared vision, with close links to the proposed Global Climate Change Alliance.

This will take into account African initiatives such as the Climate for Development in Africa Programme (ClimDev Africa), which was set up to integrate climate risk management into development across the continent.

It will also factor in the need to act on and further develop climate-related instruments, especially the UNFCCC and Kyoto. And it will represent an integrated framework for cooperation between Africa and the EU on climate change.[1]

The reality: failure to deliver

As we've seen, the commitments to deliver on climate to Africa are big – both in range and import. But what has happened beyond the negotiating tables?

The CDM The Nairobi Work Programme is one of the actions initiated for delivering UNFCCC commitments. Focusing on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, the programme was created specifically to help developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, improve their level of participation in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) – through which some Northern nations reduce emissions by investing in clean technology in the South.

Yet Africa still sees only a limited number of CDM projects. Among the 15 CDM project activities registered by the mechanism's executive board between 20 October and 8 November 2008, none is for Africa.[2] And as of August 2008, only 71 out of 1205 CDM projects registered were for Africa – a mere fraction.[3]

Funds for adaptation Financial transfer has fared little better. Three funds have been set up to support adaptation activities in developing countries: the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) under the UNFCCC, and the Adaptation Fund (AF) under the Kyoto Protocol. The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund's Strategic Priority for Adaptation (SPA) also works as an adaptation funding scheme.

These funds are relatively small, however. All are based on voluntary pledges and contributions from donors except for the AF, which gets a 2 per cent share of proceeds from CDM projects.

Moreover, the pledges have been slow in coming in. As of March 2008, a total of US$298 million had been pledged for adaptation under the LDCF, SCCF and SPA, but they actually held just US$200 million. This means that some US$98 million pledged to the UNFCCC is outstanding.

Meanwhile, funding through the AF has yet to become operational.

In addition, a promise made under the multilateral 2001 Political Declaration by Canada, the EU, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland on funding for developing countries includes an undertaking to provide an annual contribution of US$410 million by 2005, with this level to be reviewed in 2008.[4] However, this seems to be forgotten.

NAPAs The National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) are another area where pledges are not being honoured. These plans under the UNFCCC provide a process for LDCs to identify their adaptation priorities. Twenty-six African countries had completed NAPAs by October 2008.

Countries with completed plans are then meant to access the LDCF for implementation funds. But as so few developed countries have contributed to this fund, the process is in jeopardy.

Marie Monimart

Running dry? Parts of Africa could face climate change-driven water stress

ODA Current Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds for adaptation are also stalled at only a fraction of poor countries' estimated investment needs. A mere handful of developed countries have achieved the target, reaffirmed most recently in Monterrey, Mexico, of providing 0.7 per cent of their gross national income as ODA.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has estimated that in 2006 only about US$40 billion was available as 'programmable aid' (that is, total ODA minus debt-forgiveness grants, bilateral humanitarian aid, administration costs, in-donor country refugee costs and imputed student costs), which again is considerably less than the investment needed for adaptation.

The G8 Even though the G8 has a vision of halving global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, they do not provide a baseline for the reductions. Also, the G8 countries have so far contributed very limited funding to adaptation in developing countries, which does not match even the most urgent adaptation needs as identified by the NAPAs.[5]

Nor have any of the G8 countries achieved their ODA commitments so far. By the end of 2007, two years after the G8 promised to add US$50 billion a year to ODA by 2010, they were only 10 per cent of the way to their target.

Although individual countries had made announcements before the 2008 summit, they did little to show how they would fund the shortfall in pledges made at their 2005 summit at Gleneagles. The situation remains unclear, and most of the G8 countries are falling behind in meeting their commitments.[6]

The EU The EU has pledged to double its aid to developing countries, including those in Africa, to US$80 billion by 2010, and some EU states aim for aid that totals 0.7 per cent of their national income by 2015. But overall, EU funding for Africa does not match Africa's adaptation needs, as outlined in the NAPAs.

According to some recent studies, the EU's contribution to adaptation financing should be over 30 per cent of the total needed, and the top five contributors should be Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Cheques and balances: the need to build trust

The global commitments made to combat the climate change problem in Africa are both needed and welcomed. But with the international community lagging behind their own scheduled pledges, Africa's situation in the face of ongoing climate change and serious socioeconomic challenges is becoming increasingly urgent.

The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and other sources point to the costs for the continent. Africa could see spreading desertification round the Sahara, leading to forced migration. Cereal crop yields could fall drastically. Water stress and soaring temperatures could become facts of life. And such impacts are only part of a potentially grim future.

To climate-proof Africa, pledges need to be met. As national funding in Africa to support climate-related activities is the lowest for any continent, the international commitments must be delivered. Today's diffuse and scattered support for Africa must be joined up and made more robust.

Developing new, binding and predictable international financial mechanisms is key if African countries are to boost their adaptive capacity. New strategies for adaptation must be discovered. And Africa needs also to play a bigger part in the CDM and other flexible mechanisms.

But there is more. Strong international political will in climate change mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology transfer is imperative. The international community must swiftly follow through the commitments made by defining clear outcomes and timetables and making practical arrangements for monitoring deliveries.

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Further reading & websites

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Notes

■ [1] EU. *First Action Plan (2008-2010) for the Implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership*. See www.africa-eu-partnership.org/documents/EAS2007_action_plan_2008_2010_en.pdf#nameddest=climate_1 ■ [2] See http://cdm.unfccc.int/Projects/index.html. ■ [3] *CDM Projects in Africa, 26 August 2008*. See www.unep.org/pdf/PressReleases/AfricanTrends.pdf. ■ [4] IISD Reporting Services. 30 July 2001. *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*. IISD, New York. See www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb12176e.pdf. ■ [5] German Watch. 2008. *Climate Change Adaptation in Developing Countries: What the G8 has to deliver.* Discussion Paper. See www.germanwatch.org/klima/g8adapt08.pdf. ■ [6] Hohne, N., Hagemann, M. and Moltmann, S. 2008. *G8 Climate Scorecards*. WWF, Gland, Switzerland. See 2008_g8_climate_scorecards[1].pdf.

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