

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

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Abstract

Countries will meet in Paris to conclude the 2015 Global Climate Agreement (GCA). In a departure from previous attempts, such as the Kyoto Protocol, where climate targets were 'prescribed', countries will be submitting their self-determined climate commitments which will form an integral part of the GCA. African countries' participation in climate change negotiations has always been challenging, with these countries often playing catch-up. In this context, this paper explores how African countries can constructively and effectively engage in the 'new' international climate change negotiations. This paper analyses the pledges made by African countries, in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), to establish their key mitigation and adaptation priorities. Based on these priorities the paper recommends various ways in which African countries can successfully engage in the final round of negotiations for the GCA. Findings indicate that the top priority mitigation areas are energy, agriculture and forestry. For adaptation, the top priority sectors are water, agriculture, health and biodiversity. It is important to note that all African countries' INDCs request financial and technical support for means of implementation. Further, African countries place strong emphasis on taking climate action within the context of sustainable development. Key recommendations for African countries' strategic engagement in negotiations for the post-2020 climate regime are as follows: negotiate for clear and articulate provisions for means of implementation for the INDC contributions and also explore other innovative sources means of this support; negotiate for a robust assessment and review of commitments that encompass support for long term/sustainable and all-inclusive implementation strategies, within the principles of the UNFCCC- as complementary partners. This paper concludes that a coherent Africa Group position based on empirical research and evidence, especially on the INDCs, stands to enhance strategic engagement of African countries in the post-2020 international climate regime.

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1. Introduction

Countries will be meeting in Paris, France in December 2015 to conclude a new global climate 'protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force' to go into effect in the year 2020¹. This will be a culmination of negotiations on a global climate agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. The post-Kyoto agreement gained momentum in the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The negotiations for the Global Climate Agreement (GCA) have embraced an approach that is markedly different from that of the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol legally obligated major emitters from industrialised countries only to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a prescribed amount. The Protocol entered into force on 16 February, 2005 and commits the so-called Annex I party countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions-carbon dioxide equivalents by 5.2% below 1990 levels during the 2008-2012 commitment period (UNFCCC, 1998).

The Kyoto Protocol, however, has not led to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as most countries failed to meet their targets with some even emitting more². Furthermore, some major emitters, most notably the United States, did not ratify the Protocol, despite signing it. Japan and Canada withdrew from the protocol, and few of the industrialised countries, with the notable exception of the European Union countries, have signed up for the second commitment period

of the Kyoto Protocol. By and large, the Kyoto Protocol has faced resounding criticism for its lack of effectiveness perhaps mostly due to a top-down approach, where emission commitments were imposed on countries.³ Furthermore, the Kyoto Protocol entrenched the 'firewall' that has plagued climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC since its inception, as it divided countries into developed countries (Annex I) and emerging, developing and least developed countries (non-Annex I)⁴. This approach has proven to be problematic in moving forward towards enhanced climate action since emissions have grown and some of the signatories of this protocol withdrew⁵.

The post-Kyoto negotiations have mainly focused on a bottom-up approach, with the objective of getting more countries, beyond Annex I, to commit to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. This turning point can be traced to the Copenhagen negotiations during COP15, when countries could not agree on a global climate agreement simply because emerging economies such as China did not agree to take up any obligations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The GCA may for the first time include legal obligations for emerging, developing and least developed countries. This is because countries have been submitting the national climate pledges in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), as mandated by the COP19 decision, which invited '*all Parties to initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their intended nationally determined contribu-*

1 decision 1/CP.17

2 UNEP 2013

3 Prins and Rayner 2007a; Prins and Rayner 2007b; Wara 2008

4 Bodansky 2011

5 Depledge and Yamin 2009

tions, and to communicate them well in advance of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so) in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the intended contributions, without prejudice to the legal nature of the contributions”⁶.

The anticipated universal nature of the Global Climate Agreement will be a major shift from the persistent partitioning of countries into groups, a persistent issue in the climate change negotiations. The paper 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.

This analysis was guided by the following overarching questions:

- What are the emergent priorities in the African INDCs?
- Do these INDCs reflect a shift in African countries’ engagement in multilateral climate change negotiations?
- What are the emergent challenges and opportunities arising from the African countries INDCs and how can enhance the engagement of the African countries in the post-2020 international climate regime?

This research is a contribution to development of evidence by African researchers to support the engagement of African countries in multilateral climate negotiations. This is in response to the limited research available to support African negotiators⁷.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 dis-

cusses the political economy of climate change. Section 3 gives an overview of African countries’ engagement in multilateral climate change negotiations. Section 4 presents the results of analysis of INDCs submitted by 43 African countries, followed by subsequent discussions in Section 5. Section 6 presents conclusions and recommendations for strategic engagement of African countries’ in the post-2020 international climate regime.

2. The Political Economy of the Climate Change Challenge

It is instructive to explore and understand the political economy of the climate change challenge, as well as the historical backdrop and context within which African countries have engaged in multilateral climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC. Understanding the political economy of climate change, especially as regards African countries, is critical for contextualising the INDCs submitted by these countries, since they are, by and large, a reflection of each country’s political and economic priorities.

African countries have been engaging in multilateral environmental negotiations, mainly as part of a larger grouping termed as the Global South, a colloquial term for developing and least developed countries. Perhaps the most poignant difference between the perceptions of the Global North (developed countries) and Global South is how countries in these two groups perceive environmental problems. The Global North mostly views environmental problems as a problem of pollution and degradation of the natural capital. On the contrary, the Global South views these environmental problems as

⁶ decision 1/CP.19

⁷ Makina 2003: 43

development challenges linked to poverty⁸. Towards this end, several instruments have been developed to mobilise and transfer resources from the Global North to the Global South so as to facilitate the latter's engagements on environmental management. Examples of these instruments include the Multilateral Fund under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund under the UNFCCC; and the Global Environment Facility under the UNFCCC and the UN Convention on Biodiversity⁹.

This policy and conceptual difference has been clearly manifested in the climate change challenge, where the Global South perceives the challenge as more of a pollution problem whose remedy is addressing the pollution. In this case, the solution involves reducing the emission of greenhouse gases – mainly carbon dioxide – to the atmosphere. On the other hand, the Global South perceives climate change as a development challenge, and posits that any action taken by countries in this group should not compromise their ability to pursue economic development to address poverty and other human challenges¹⁰. Furthermore, this view becomes more pronounced when the historical emissions of African countries, which is minimal, is considered.

The last three decades have seen a transformative shift in the debate on environmental protection to encompass other aspects such as society and the economy¹¹. The famous Brundtland Report, titled *Our Common Future*, brought to fore the concept of sustainable development. However, this trans-

formation has not been universally reflected in the climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC given some stark conceptual differences between blocs of countries on how to address climate change. Most of the Global North prefers market-based instruments while the Global South prefers compensation mechanisms and emissions reductions that are not binding¹².

Before the inception of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform on Enhanced Action (ADP) negotiation track in 2011, multilateral climate negotiations under the UNFCCC have always focused on getting a few countries, with the biggest historical greenhouse emissions responsibility – to commit to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, as well as mobilizing financial and technological resources for developing and least developed countries to address climate change¹³. However, this approach has been inadequate in addressing the climate challenge given that greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise despite the operationalisation of the Kyoto Protocol.

The fundamental flaw of the Kyoto Protocol is in its design, which was premised on 'plausible but inappropriate' previous treaty regimes designed to address ozone depletion, acid rain and nuclear arms, with the basic assumption that climate change would be addressed by taking direct emission controls, without taking into consideration the complexity of climate change¹⁴. Furthermore, the loopholes in the Protocol allowed profiteers to make money from Clean Develop-

8 Najam 2005a

9 Pauw et al. 2014

10 Kante 2011; Najam 2005a; Najam 2005b; Founex 1972

11 Kante 2011: 2

12 Newell 2010; Makina 2013; Gupta 2000

13 Article 3.1 of the UNFCCC: *...Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.*

14 Prins and Rayner 2007: 973

ment Mechanisms (CDM) projects, by exploiting accounting loopholes, without actually reducing emissions in a permanent and sustainable way¹⁵. The withdrawal of major emitters such as Australia and Canada, as well as the failure by the US Senate to ratify the Kyoto Protocol has also contributed to the Protocol's dismal performance.

The ADP took a different approach by targeting the involvement of all party countries to the UN-FCCC to make contributions to tackle climate change. This watershed in multilateral environmental negotiations set the overarching contours of the post-2020 international climate regime.

3. Africa Group's Engagement in Multilateral Climate Change Negotiations

Africa's engagement in multilateral environmental negotiations has been less than convincingly successful, with very few exceptions¹⁶. Some analyses of their performance have been critical, with some noting that "Africa, so far, has failed demonstrably to articulate any position unique to it, and has therefore been largely marginal in the negotiations"¹⁷. This is because the Africa group – the main negotiating body of African countries – has been disenfranchised in these negotiations.

Several factors that have contributed to this challenge have been identified: inadequate delegation size; insufficient delegation composition; lack of familiarity with how negotiations are done; lack of research to support position; and other technical issues such as financial constraints¹⁸. The en-

agement of developing country negotiators has been characterised as a 'hollow mandate' since most of these negotiators usually do not have the benefit of clear political directives from their governments when they enter the negotiations¹⁹. Despite these challenges, it is fair to note that there have been marked improvements in how African countries have engaged in multilateral environmental negotiations in general. The successful Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) negotiations that led to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a poignant case of successful environmental diplomacy by the African Group, given that in these negotiations African countries were very well prepared before and during the negotiations²⁰.

However, success has often eluded African countries in the multilateral climate change negotiations, where they have had to resort to tactics such as walkouts and boycotts so as to get concessions from other countries, as was evident during COP15. Furthermore, the impact and effectiveness of the African Group has been greatly constrained by spending more time opposing unfavourable policies as compared to developing proposals that advance their interests²¹. This means that if well organised, African countries can be more successful and effective in multilateral climate.

The 2015 Global Climate Agreement, where countries make their own pledges on climate action, presents an important opportunity for African countries to put forward actions and proposals that advance their interests in more of a proactive than reactive manner.

15 Wara, M. 2008

16 Mumma 2001

17 Mumma 2001: 198

18 Makina 2013: 43

19 Makina 2013: 41; Richards (2001)

20 Makina 2013: 44

21 Green 2004

4. Analysis of African Countries' INDCs

Since they were first mentioned at COP19 in Warsaw, INDCs have emerged as the building blocks for the new global climate agreement²². 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 as at 30 September 2015²³. 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 upon²⁴. Furthermore, the lack of detailed, clear guidelines on the development of INDCs has made it almost impossible to anticipate the scope that individual INDCs will adopt.

²² UNFCCC 2013

²³ <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx> as of 10 November 2015

²⁴ Bodansky 2015

Methodology

This report analysed the 43 INDCs by African countries, which were submitted by October 1, 2015, the preferred deadline for INDCs to be analysed and incorporated into the subsequent UNFCCC synthesis report. The main objective of this analysis was to determine the overarching themes and trends present in the INDCs of the African countries.

An in-depth content analysis of INDCs was undertaken in an iterative in order to retrieve emerging themes²⁵. These themes were then coded into key sectors, with the keywords outlined in Appendix.

Since INDCs do not have a particular format, it was not feasible to explore the key themes via examining the sections. Rather, a more pragmatic approach was undertaken by searching for certain

²⁵ White and Marsh 2006; Kohlbacher 2006

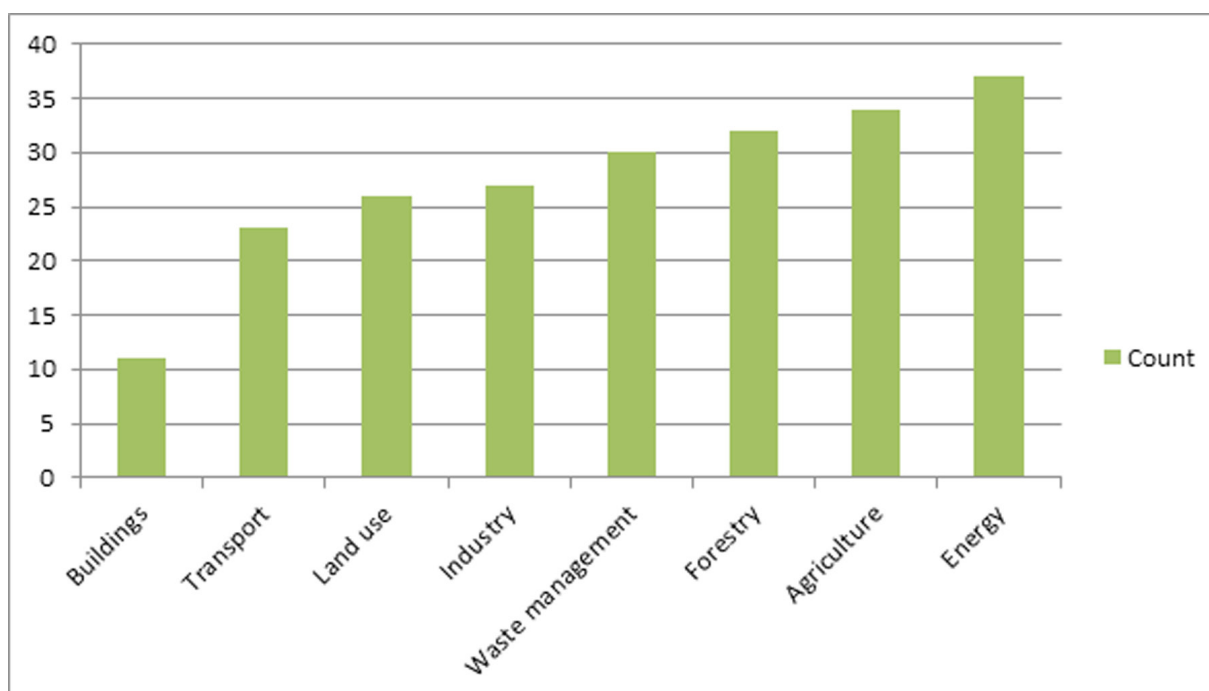


Fig. 1: Most mentioned mitigation sectors of African countries. Source: Retrieved from African countries' INDCs

key words in the INDC documents – attached as Annex I. All documents that were not in Portable Document Format (PDF) were converted to that format, and the PDF search function used. In order to ensure veracity of keywords, each of the INDCs was read through. The keywords used were translated into three languages since the INDCs that were analysed were available in 3 languages: English, French and Spanish.

The key metric in this analysis was the number of times a keyword appeared in all the INDCs. For instance, if the keyword is ‘sustainable development’, if it appears once or even more than once, then its count was recorded as one count. Therefore if all the 43 INDCs analysed had the keyword ‘sustainable development’ then the maximum count that the keyword would have is 43. A high count of a keyword indicates high priority; the converse is true for a low count.

Priority sectors in this analysis were understood to be sectors mentioned by most countries, and not how individual countries perceived priority. This is because the focus of this analysis was on the aggregate of African countries’ INDCs, and not individual INDCs. For instance, if all countries mentioned ‘Energy’ as a mitigation sector, and fewer countries mentioned ‘waste management’ as one of the mitigation sectors, then ‘Energy’ was understood to be of greater priority to the African countries, on aggregate.

Results

This section presents results from the analysis of African countries INDCs that have been submitted to the UNFCCC by 30 September 2015.

a. Mitigation

Mitigation is an important part of the climate change response, since the main objective of

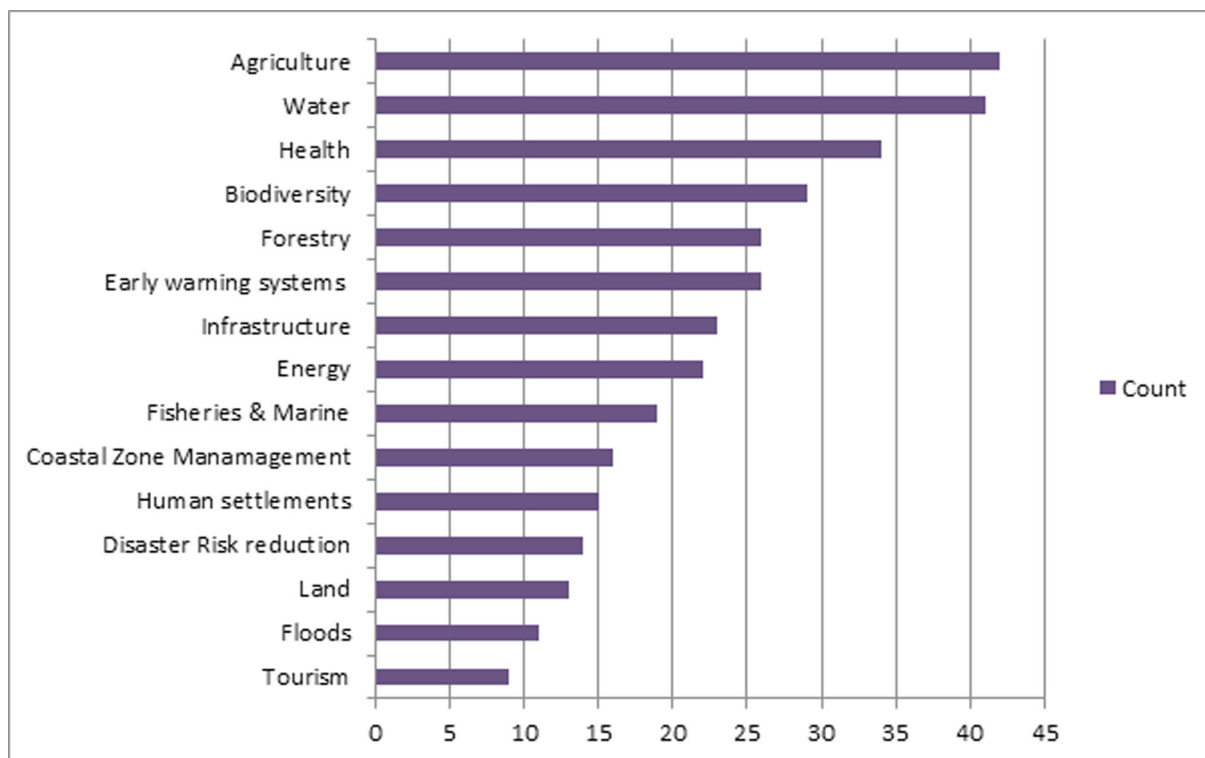


Fig. 2: Most mentioned adaptation sectors for African countries based on the number of countries mentioning the particular sector. Source: Authors

the Climate Change Convention” and *any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system*²⁶.

This analysis sought to explore whether African countries that had submitted their INDCs had made any mitigation commitments, and if so, what were the priority mitigation sectors. Results from this analysis indicate that all the 43 African countries that were analysed have indeed made mitigation commitments.

The priority mitigation areas for African countries, as depicted in their INDC, are - in decreasing order of priority: energy; agriculture; forestry; waste management; industry; land use; transport and buildings. The difference in aggregate count between energy, agriculture and forestry was quite small, meaning that the three

sectors can be understood to be almost equally important.

b. Adaptation

Adaptation is also an objective of the UNFCCC, calling for mitigation action that “*should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner*”²⁷.

Adaptation is a priority for African countries since they bear disproportionate impacts of climate change²⁸. Water, agriculture and health are the two most important adaptation sectors for African countries. Agriculture and water were given equal importance, with 42 of the 43 INDCs analysed including agriculture in its adaptation sectors. This was consistent with findings from an earlier analysis of priority adaptation sectors for Least Developed Countries, of which Africa

²⁷ Article 2 of the UNFCCC
²⁸ IPCC 2007; UNEP 2014

²⁶ Article 2 of the Climate Change Convention

Table 1 Linkage of climate action to sustainable development

Issue	Linkage with climate action (%)	
	Yes	No
Sustainable Development	88	12
National circumstances/context	70	30
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	9	91
National development plans, policies and institutions	100	0

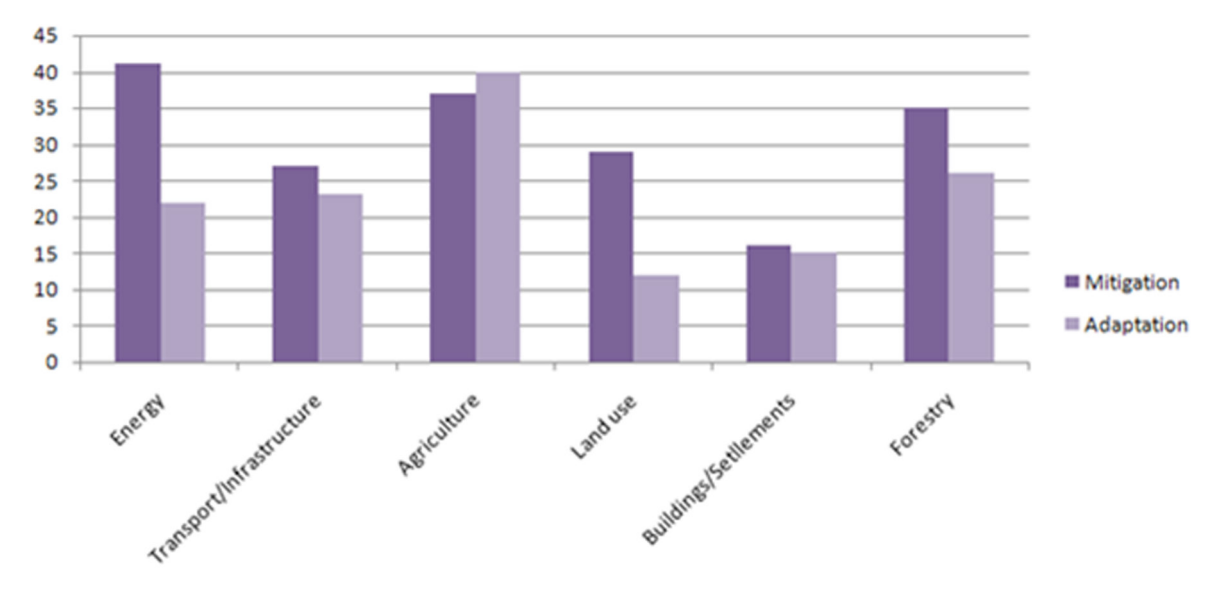


Fig. 3: Balance between mitigation and adaptation for cross-cutting sectors. Source: Authors

has the highest number²⁹.

Biodiversity, forestry, development of early warning systems, infrastructure and energy were the second cluster of importance, since more than half of the analysed INDCs included them in their adaptation plans and actions.

c. Linkage to sustainable development

Most African countries have argued that climate action should be undertaken within the sustainable development framework, since they perceive climate change as more of a development problem than a pollution problem; see Table 1.

Thirty eight of the INDCs analysed linked climate change within their sustainable development plans and actions. Only 5 INDCs did not mention sustainable development³⁰. However it is important to note that only the phrase ‘sustainable development’ was searched in these INDCs; there may be variations in usage of this phrase to

convey the same concept.

Furthermore, there was strong linkage between climate action and national circumstances /context, with 70% of the INDCs analysed indicating this linkage.

This analysis also explored if African countries perceived a linkage between the international climate action and post 2015 development agenda through linkage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at this point in time. Interestingly, only 9% of the countries indicated this linkage. Furthermore, all the INDCs analysed linked their INDCs to national development institutions, plans, programmes and policies.

d. Loss and damage

This analysis sought to explore whether African countries included loss and damage in their INDCs. This is of great interest since loss and damage is closely related to disasters – which appeared in the priority adaptation sectors. 17% of the INDCs analysed made reference to loss and

²⁹ Pauw and Pegels 2013

³⁰ Botswana, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Madagascar and Rwanda

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.

e. Balance between mitigation and adaptation

The balance between mitigation and adaptation, in terms of priority, was explored. This was undertaken by first identifying sectors that were identified for both mitigation and adaptation. The frequency of these sectors was then assessed, mitigation vis-a-vis 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. On the other hand, agriculture was slightly skewed towards adaptation. The results are depicted in Figure 3 below.

Buildings and settlements were given equal consideration for both mitigation and adaptation, indicating the need to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through efficient building/settlement design, but at the same time adapting them to withstand the impacts of climate change, especially at the coastal areas.

f. Costing of mitigation and adaptation actions

All the INDCs analysed made conditional and unconditional mitigation and adaptation commitments. 33 of the 43 INDCs analysed (78%)

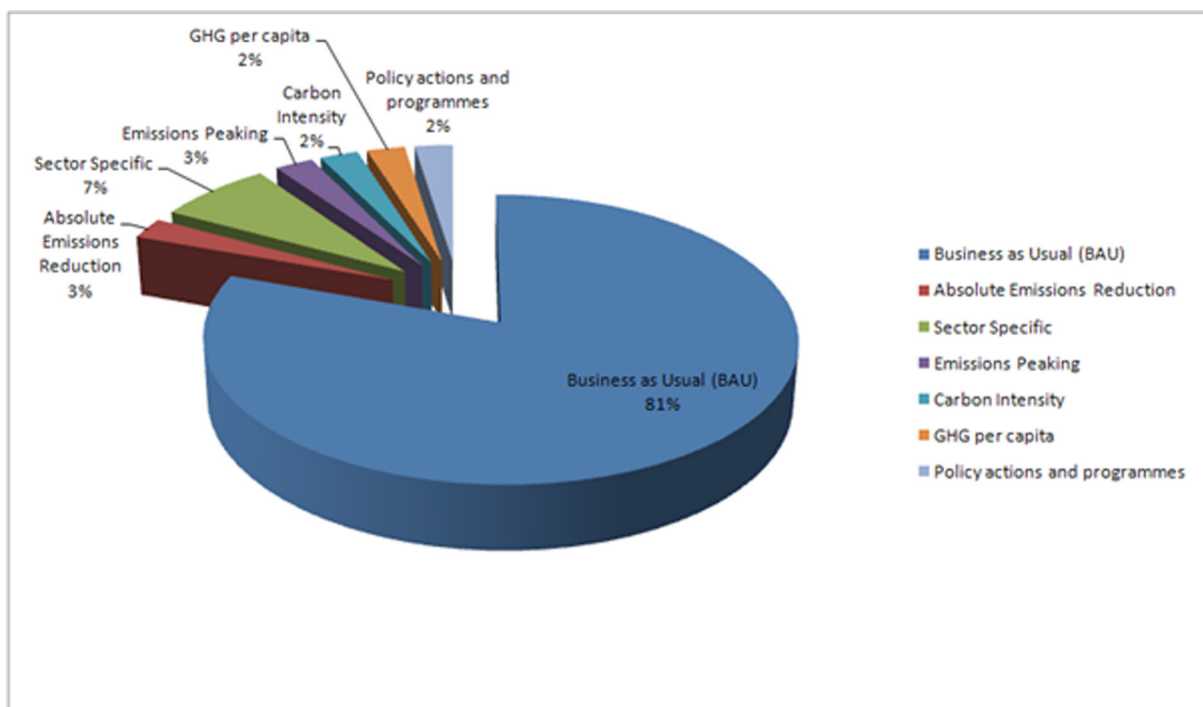


Fig. 4: Mitigation reference types used by African countries. Source: Authors

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.

g. Emissions reference and projections

Most of the African country INDCs analysed (81%) used Business as Usual (BAU) as the reference for their emission reductions. This can be understood as a preference for more flexibility that is offered by BAU, as compared to other emission reduction references. Sector specific emissions reduction was next in preference after BAU was, where the countries that used that reference identified sectors that they would undertake their mitigation actions, and subsequently outlined those actions.

South Africa preferred using emissions peaking; this is an interesting finding when viewed in the context of the country being the leading greenhouse gas emitter in Africa, and also part of the emerging economies. Other countries (2%) focused on policy actions and programme to comprise their mitigation commitments.

33 of the INDCs analysed identified the year 2030 as the end year of the mitigation and adaptation commitments. Two countries identified the year

2050 while three more countries identified the year 2025. One country identified the year 2040, two countries the year 2035. The BAU scenario may be understood to provide greater flexibility in implementing climate actions.

5. Discussions

This section presents a discussion of the main findings from this study, as well as their significance.

Identifying the importance and priority of mitigation and adaptation actions is critical for Africa's engagement in the multilateral climate change negotiations, since it addresses one of the major challenges that have hampered the effectiveness of the Africa Group in these negotiations – being proactive and having clear objectives and priorities. While different countries have varying priorities to some degree, these findings are of instrumental utility to the common negotiating position of the Africa Group. With these mitigation and adaptation priorities, it will be much easier for Africa country delegates to keep track of their key priority areas, and ensure that this is reflected in any subsequent agreement and commitments.

a. Mitigation and adaptation priorities

Results from this analysis indicate that energy is the biggest mitigation priority in Africa. This is understandable given that about 620 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are not connected to the grid, thus the continent has been termed as the 'epicentre of the global challenge to overcome energy poverty'³¹. However, this poses a major challenge as well since it makes mitigation more challenging if all the new energy is not low-carbon and renewable. African countries

³¹ IEA 2014: 3

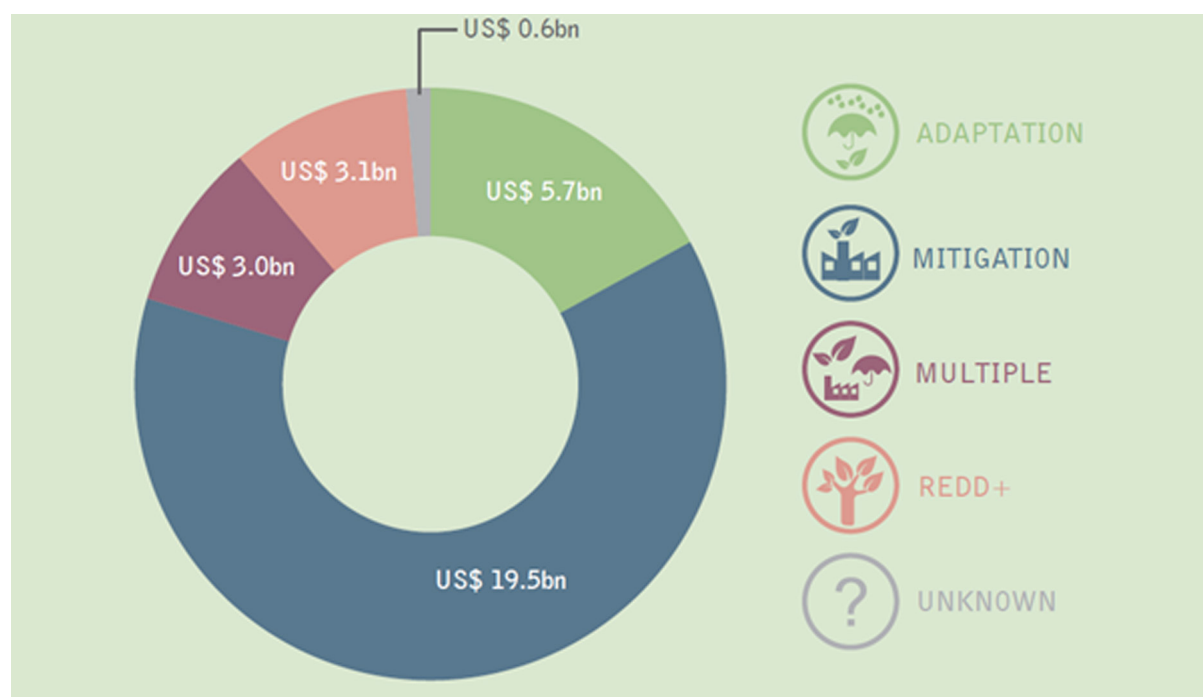


Fig. 5: Fast start climate finance disbursement by sector (2010-2012). Source: Overseas Development Institute

may want to capitalise on the valuable opportunity offered by new clean energy systems instead of fossil fuel³². Further, there exist vast financial incentives for clean energy from both regional and international development agencies. The African Development Bank's recent announcement of a 'New Deal for Energy in Africa' is a harbinger for the potential and promise of clean energy in Africa³³. Focusing on agriculture and water for climate change adaptation in Africa puts more focus on the priority adaptation actions for African countries.

b. Linkage between climate action and sustainable development

The linkage between climate action and sustainable development remains strong. The results from this analysis indicate that a majority of African countries perceive and pursue climate ac-

tion in a manner that does not jeopardise their ability to address other development issues. This is mainly expressed through climate change adaptation.

The top three adaptation priority sectors – agriculture, water and health - for African countries vindicate this notion and approach. Food security is a major development in Africa, given that agriculture is the biggest employment sector in Africa, employing about 65% of the continent's labour force, and contributes to about 32% of the continent's GDP³⁴. Water insecurity and health are also major issues, given that it has been demonstrated that increasing temperatures are increasing prevalence and resilience of pathogens causing infectious diseases.

But perhaps a more instructive nexus is between climate change and poverty reduction in Africa. African countries have pursued poverty reduction in the last fifteen years mainly under the

32 APP 2015)

33 AfDB 2015

34 World Bank 2013

ambit of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which came to an end in 2015. Despite reducing poverty levels from 56.5% in 1990 to 48.4% in 2010, sub-Saharan African countries continue to experience slow rates of poverty reduction³⁵. Furthermore, shocks such as climate change pose threats to the gains made in poverty reduction in these countries. This clearly explains the importance of framing climate action within sustainable development in Africa, and its reflection in the African countries INDCs. This is mainly through adapting these development sectors to be able to withstand the impacts of climate change.

c. Mobilizing and accessing climate finance

Climate finance is critical in implementing climate actions, and has been one of the most important and also highly contentious issues in multilateral climate change negotiations. This is premised on the mobilisation of compensation mechanism under the Climate Change Convention, where developed countries with the biggest historical responsibility for climate change and also due to their greater financial capacity mobilise resources to assist developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change and its impacts. Therefore it was no surprise that support for means of implementation – financial, technological and capacity – was reflected in all the INDCs analysed. Therefore critical financial instruments and mechanisms that have been developed will be critical to mobilising these resources.

In a departure from previous engagements and practise, African countries have pledged to commit part of their domestic resources to implement their climate commitments, and termed this as unconditional actions. However, all the INDCs analysed

come with a caveat that additional action will be contingent on external support such as through the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Of the 24 countries that indicated both their mitigation and adaptation costs, 58% had a higher cost for mitigation as compared to adaptation, while 42% had adaptation actions that were higher than their mitigation actions. This may be understood to mean that climate finance needed to implement these INDCs will need to be almost split between mitigation and adaptation. This is a significant finding given that African countries have always prioritised adaptation far much more than mitigation, yet international climate finance has always skewed towards mitigation. This thus goes against the grain of the position of the African Group, which prioritises adaptation over mitigation funding. This funding merits further reflection by African policy makers and negotiators on how to effectively approach negotiating for and mobilising international climate finance.

African countries will therefore have to strive to realise the balance between mitigation and adaptation climate finance. Furthermore, by providing detailed costs to climate actions, African countries have a concrete basis to negotiate for means of implementation of their INDCs. This is significantly notable progress, a stark contrast from the previous disarray, poor preparation and lack of evidence that undermined Africa's engagement in the climate change negotiations, most notably the negotiations on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)³⁶. The weak position in these negotiations in 1998, as espoused in its position paper "African Common Position on Clean Development Mechanism" has been termed as:

³⁶ Mumma 2001

³⁵ UNECA 2015: xiii

“...not an inspired performance, and fails totally to make a compelling African case on an issue of great importance to Africa. Where it does take a stand, it is often basically a restatement of the G77 and China position without any further insights. Often it demonstrates a lack of consistency and much internal contradiction. It could not but be ignored at the negotiations since, unlike other developing countries whose potential global emissions, populations and strategic importance to developed countries give them a voice in the negotiations, Africa can only receive attention if it puts forward a compelling case”³⁷.

This time around African countries can build a compelling case based on the details contained in their INDCs, and strive to negotiate for sufficient and targeted means of implementation to enable them implement their climate actions.

d. Role of science, technology and innovation

All the African countries' INDCs analysed indicated the need for support in the form of means of implementation (MOI). This is mainly through financial and technological support. The UNFCCC already has a mechanism to facilitate transfer of technology, the Technology Mechanism (TM), but it has not realised significant gains mainly due to contentions over intellectual property rights of the technology. However, the commitment by African countries to use some of their resources to undertake climate action provides a window of opportunity to foster endogenous technologies to assist them implement their climate actions.

Information Communication Technology is already transforming several sectors in Africa, such as the mobile revolution that has transformed

banking in the continent in unprecedented ways. In the same breath, African countries should take the onus to foster innovations in science and technology to tackle climate change and also spur clean energy revolution in the continent. Technological advances and population dynamics – especially the youth bulge – are important advantages towards this. Furthermore, political and technological tides are turning towards a clean energy revolution, as is evidenced by the call for a “Global Apollo Programme to Combat Climate Change”³⁸. This project is premised on a massive increase in public-funding to spur a clean energy revolution in the next decade.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This paper sought to explore how African countries perceive their engagement in the multilateral climate change negotiations; their priority action areas; and identifying how these countries can strategically engage in the 2015 Global Climate Agreement. This was achieved by analysing 43 climate action pledges, in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), submitted by African countries to the UNFCCC by 01 October 2015.

Results indicate that the top mitigation action areas for African countries are energy, agriculture and forestry. Agriculture, water and health are the major sectors of priority for climate change adaptation. Furthermore, all the INDCs assessed indicated the need for support to implement their climate actions, mainly in the form of finance and technology development and transfer.

³⁷ Mumma 2001: 199

³⁸ King, D. et al. 2015

The INDCs also indicate a preference to balance between mitigation and adaptation, especially with regard to means of implementation. This means that Africa Group's negotiation strategy in the sectors that cut across mitigation and adaptation – such as energy, agriculture and forestry – should reflect this balance. However, since most countries analysed had higher costs for mitigation than for adaptation, greater reflection is needed on how to balance the position of the Africa Group (which prioritises adaptation) with specific country needs.

In terms of means of implementation, the analysis indicates that African countries have clearly identified the sectors and costs of their climate actions. Most of the INDCs analysed include costs for mitigation, adaptation, with others even including costs for technology development and transfer. Furthermore, most INDCs disaggregated unconditional actions support (domestic resources) and conditional actions (external resources). International market mechanisms were identified as a possible source of climate finance; this may be feasible, but the greater question of who gets the emission reduction credits/rights needs to be clearly thought out.

In sum, the detailed nature of African countries' INDCs indicates that these countries have clearly identified, prioritised and costed their climate actions. Furthermore, given that many African countries managed to submit their INDCs 'under high time pressure' due to the short time available to do so, underscores their commitment to climate action. This is of critical importance because it forms the basis for strategic and objective engagement of African countries towards the 2015 Global Climate Agreement. It is also important for mobilising resources through the UNFCCC mechanisms as well as other sources outside of the UNFCCC.

Key Recommendations

a. Means of Implementation

Securing resources for means of implementation will be critical for African countries to realise their climate commitments. To this end, the detailed nature of most African countries' INDCs provides an important basis on which to negotiate for adequate mobilisation of resources, and in a balanced manner. This targeted approach should ensure that resources for adaptation are scaled up to meet the identified needs. African countries should also be conscious of the trade-offs between mitigation and adaptation presented by cross-cutting sectors such as agriculture and forestry.

b. Assessment and Review of commitments

Assessment and review (A&R) of INDCs will be critical to the success of the post-2020 international climate regime, especially with the aim to 'ratchet up' the commitments over time³⁹. African countries should push for five year reviews, mostly with a focus on means of implementation so as to be able to implement their climate actions. In particular, they should make certain if an A&R mechanism is set up with a 'ratchet up' provision – that is revising commitments upwards – then provisions for means of implementation should be scaled up to match these extra commitments. African countries should as well negotiate for clear provisions for means of implementation, as well as a robust A&R mechanism for these provisions so as to avoid equivocation on these commitments as has been the case thus far.

c. Engagement beyond the UNFCCC

The multilateral climate regime has been changing in structure. Most notably, other actors beyond the

³⁹ Van Asselt et. al 2015

States have started being formally integrated into the multilateral climate regime. The Lima Paris Action Agenda (LPAA) is one formal linkage that brings non-state actors into the multilateral climate regime⁴⁰. Other proposals for the engagement of non-state actors have been developed⁴¹. This is a watershed moment, and African countries should take cognisance of this by fostering the engagement of non-state actors into their climate actions. This can be through strengthening of sub-national agencies such as cities to be able to engage diverse actors; fostering public private partnerships (PPP); and creating enabling environments for innovation and private sector engagement, especially in renewable energy. However, this engagement should come with a strong caveat, that any such parallel regimes should be guided by the core principles of the UNFCCC. This way, African countries will be able to ensure that their interests and priorities are attained. In other words, the LPAA and other parallel regimes should not be embraced as a panacea.

⁴⁰ <http://climateaction.unfccc.int/aboutlpaa.aspx>

⁴¹ Chan and Pauw 2014

d. Linkage between climate action and sustainable development

The sectors identified as priorities for adaptation to climate change are closely related to development. Since African countries still have numerous development challenges, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) obligations, it will be of critical importance to strengthen the linkage and synergy between climate action and other development actions. This will also be of great importance to efficient and optimal utilisation of limited financial resources.

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Annex I: List of African countries' INDCs that were analysed

1	Algeria	23	Liberia
2	Benin	24	Madagascar
3	Botswana	25	Malawi
4	Burkina Faso	26	Mali
5	Burundi	27	Mauritania
6	Cameroon	28	Mauritius
7	Cape Verde	29	Morocco
8	Central African Republic (CAR)	30	Mozambique
9	Chad	31	Namibia
10	Comoros	32	Rwanda
11	Congo	33	Sao Tome and Principe
12	Cote d'Ivoire	34	Senegal
13	Djibouti	35	Seychelles
14	DR Congo	36	Sierra Leone
15	Equatorial Guinea	37	South Africa
16	Eritrea	38	Swaziland
17	Ethiopia	39	Tanzania
18	Gabon	40	Togo
19	Gambia	41	Tunisia
20	Ghana	42	Zambia
21	Kenya	43	Zimbabwe
22	Lesotho		

Annex II: Map of African countries whose INDCs were analysed



Source: Authors

Annex III: Keywords used in the analysis

Keywords		
English	French	Spanish
sustainable development	développement durable	desarrollo sostenible
mitigation	atténuation	mitigación
adaptation	adaptation	adaptación
means of implementation	mise en œuvre	medios de ejecución
sustainable development goals	objectifs de développement durable	objetivos de desarrollo sostenible
national circumstances/context	Circonstances/contexte nationales	Circunstancias/contexto nacionales
loss and damage	pertes et dégâts	pérdidas y daños
early warning system	système d'alerte précoce	sistema de alerta temprana
water	l'hydraulique / l'eau	hidrología/agua
Agriculture	agriculture	agricultura
Health	santé	salud
Biodiversity	biodiversité	biodiversidad
Forestry	sylviculture	silvicultura
Infrastructure	infrastructure	infraestructura
Energy	énergie	energía
Fisheries / marine	pêche / marin	pesca / marina
Human settlements	règlement	asentamientos
Coastal zone management	la gestion de la zone côtière	gestión de zonas costeras
Disaster risk	risques de catastrophe	del riesgo de desastres
Land	terre	tierra
Floods	inondations	inundaciones
tourism	tourisme	turismo



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