



Engaging with Africa on Climate Change

European Climate Diplomacy

Brussels, 14 October 2011

Roundtable Report

Summary

The one day roundtable meeting – 'Engaging with Africa on Climate Change' – was co-hosted by Directorate-General for Climate Action of the European Commission and the European External Action Service. The objective was to bring representatives from African and European national administrations and diplomatic corps together with key African and EU Climate negotiators in a non-negotiating context. The idea was to allow the participants to think creatively about the key questions open in the upcoming climate conference in Durban and the longer term perspectives on climate action. The first session was dedicated to global issues related to climate governance and the EU-Africa relationship. The second session focused on how the common interests and challenges in climate governance can be translated into an effective response and action with a focus on agriculture, energy, security, finance and the broader opportunities in order to move towards a low carbon economic development path leading to sustainable economic growth. Participants welcomed the opportunity to take a step back from the UNFCCC negotiations, focussing on shared interests and long term perspectives.

- Key considerations: EU and Africa should focus on their common interest
 - (i) in reaching an agreement on a roadmap for a legally binding post-2012 climate regime,
 - (ii) in raising ambitions to close the gap towards achieving the 2 degree target, and
 - (iii) in working together to engage the major emitters.
- Co-benefits of green growth for economic development and climate action should be exploited in full. Cooperation between EU and Africa offers scope for synergies.
- Addressing challenges with a country- and needs driven approach requires integrated international efforts on research, financing and implementation in a coherent policy framework.
- To advance on the finance discussions positive examples of action and progress on the ground and in the negotiations are needed. Developing countries need more assurances of delivery on commitments made and the developed country tax payers require evidence of progress in the negotiations to justify further support.

Session I: Engaging with Africa in the international climate change negotiations

Africa and the G77 Group of developing countries in general regard the UNFCCC as the only legitimate negotiation forum for climate change issues. Failure of the negotiation process for a post-2012 agreement would be unfavourable to Africa due to its limited ability to exercise economic influence over international partners, its high exposure to negative effects of climate impacts, and its limited means to deal with the consequences. Africa looks to the EU as a leader on climate action. From the African perspective the key outcomes for Durban should consist of; a multilateral rule based system such as a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol; clarity on finance; and generally strengthening the climate architecture. The African Union negotiation bloc has been consistently speaking with one voice although it consists of countries that are members in other special interest groups such as the Least Developed Countries (LDC), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Arab League and South Africa as member of the BASIC group.

EU representatives emphasised the need for global collective action on climate change. Africa and Europe are logical allies as they share many objectives, but these common interests need to be better reflected in the international negotiations. In particular, European and African negotiators should focus on their common interest (i) in reaching an agreement on a roadmap for a legally binding post-2012 climate regime, (ii) in raising ambitions to close the gap towards achieving the 2 degree target, and (iii) in working together to engage the major emitters in the discussion. It is also in Africa's interest to resist false alliances and work towards defending the agenda of the African Continent. Given the recent alarming scientific data suggesting that the world in fact faces the worst case scenarios presented in the 4th IPCC Assessment report, some developed and developing countries need to demonstrate climate leadership by contributing more to climate action than current climate laggards. Both the African and the EU views appeared to converge on the need to emphasise a broad based move towards low carbon development strategies and increasing climate resilience, instead of bargaining on distributive justice and historic responsibilities.

The EU discussants underlined that, emission reductions in the Kyoto Protocol were based on politically agreed individual country (bottom-up) reduction targets, which reflected the state of emissions in 1997. Since then the geopolitical and economic realities have changed profoundly, notably as a result of the emergence of new economic superpowers with exponentially increasing emissions. Countries should not be allowed to interpret the Kyoto Protocol as an excuse not to accept more ambitious targets that would more accurately mirror today's realities. Clarity is needed on the required emissions reduction pathway to reach the 2 degree target and to protect Africa and other vulnerable countries from catastrophic climate change impacts. The EU continues to fully support the UNFCCC process. The Copenhagen Accord and the Cancun Agreements helped catalyze an unprecedented level of action across the world, with many countries putting forward concrete pledges to reduce or limit their emissions.

Although an important breakthrough, these pledges are yet to deliver the ambition needed to stop dangerous climate change. The EU participants reiterated their determination to show leadership and to work with their international partners towards ensuring that further agreements i) raise the level of ambition; ii) fully embed transparency and accountability; iii) ensure cost-efficiency; and iv) guarantee appropriate long term financing mechanisms and streamline the current climate finance architecture.

It was found logical during the deliberations that the EU member states and African countries would have different interests and economic capabilities to contribute to climate action. Given the shift in economic balance and power, EU participants reminded the meeting that the political support for unilaterally moving towards more ambitious climate targets within the EU is limited in the light of economic crisis, especially as a number of key trade competitors were seemingly "free riding" in the absence of any binding mitigation targets. Furthermore, in view of securing necessary support to within the domestic administrations, private sector stakeholders, and broader public, it will be important to be able to demonstrate real progress and results in the negotiations at the Durban session in December 2011. This would also help in keeping citizens and stakeholders outside the UNFCCC community engaged. At present progress was considered difficult to validate.

Views diverged on the participation of countries in the negotiations that reject a second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol and how they could be engaged in a future treaty as well as different opinions were voiced if the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP negotiation tracks under the UNFCCC should be merged into a legally binding outcome (EU position) or if these two negotiation tracks should remain separate (African position). Participants emphasised the importance of focussing on common interests and to not let the questions around a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol divide Africa and Europe at COP-17 as the overarching objective is to engage with the United States and BASIC countries on a way forward.

Challenges both partners face include mainstreaming climate action into trade, economic policy and also the impacts of climate change on migration patterns among African countries and from Africa towards Europe. However, given the benefits from innovation and investment in low carbon technologies, climate action can lead to sustainable economic growth and help developing countries in Africa and elsewhere to diverge from the carbon intensive model of economic growth. To sustain support for strong climate action and financing in Europe, it is crucial that the progress made in the negotiations is communicated to EU member states' financial authorities and the public and that the financial investment is seen to deliver desired results both in the areas of adaptation and mitigation – including activities aimed at reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

Session II: Opportunities for cooperation on climate action between EU and Africa

The severe impacts of climate change on African development require improving the link between the existing good cooperation on development issues and the international climate negotiations. The EU remains committed to helping Africa adapt to climate change and especially support its move towards a low carbon development path. If Africa takes the opportunity provided by 21st century technologies that were not available to Europe, and develops on a low emission pathway, it can leapfrog towards energy access and security. Consequently, the need for Africa to mitigate emissions later on would be lesser.

Africa faces challenges in many areas including food security and adapting its agricultural sector to climatic changes, meeting the growing demand for universal energy access as key resource to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, human and economic development and intensifying regional conflicts associated with natural resources resulting in migratory pressures and a vicious cycle of poverty.

The increased security risk of climate change requires strong international cooperation, policy coherence, credible leadership and good governance. Although climate itself does not result

in conflict, it can act as a threat multiplier accentuating tensions in an already conflict prone situation. However, there can be no "hard" policy measures – such as traditional military of defence action – to address the climate and security nexus. The collaboration in this area needs to take place through "soft" policy measures such as increased cooperation on good governance and management of natural resources, as well as other forms of developmental action and capacity building.

In this context it is crucial to further the EU-Africa debate on the possibilities provided by the agricultural and forestry sectors to reduce emissions via payments for ecosystem services such as REDD+ and their co-benefits for rural development. Key challenges should be addressed with a country- and needs driven approach. This requires integrated international efforts on research, financing and implementation in a coherent policy framework.

Innovative financing instruments should be explored to increase the leverage of public financial resources via private investment. Contributions could be via increasing the investment of financial institutions, the revenues created via carbon taxes and/or emissions trading, redirecting fossil fuel subsidies, carbon markets, greater flows of private finance and foreign direct investments. African representatives stated that fast start finance is yet to arrive in Africa and that financial assistance needs to be additional to ODA, which is being used for fixed budgets on health, education and economic development. Developing countries see the need for additional financial resources at levels up to \$500bn while there are limited opportunities for private investments in adaptation given the need for low interest rates and political risks. Addressing the challenges of institutional governance is the prerequisite for innovative financial instruments.

The EU presenters underlined the need to consider the longer term financial commitment of \$100bn annually as a combination of public and private funding and to place more emphasis on the mobilisation of smart private financing that could maximise the co-benefits to developing country economies in the longer term and help develop economic competitiveness and governance.

African and EU discussants agreed that these climate risks need to be ameliorated by increasing mitigation ambitions in the UNFCCC negotiations. Mitigation could be more clearly framed as "avoided adaptation". Developing targets and indicators to mobilize and deliver the financial resources required will be a necessary step forward, as will improving institutional design on the national and international level, and particularly by developing and implementing a green economy-based climate resilient development strategy by mainstreaming climate action into national development processes.

Millions of new jobs can be created in green sectors such as renewable energy industries, organic agriculture, public transport, energy efficiency, health care and recycling with positive co-benefits for health, environment and social coherence. Investment in clean technologies and sustainable agriculture is at the heart of a low carbon economic development strategy and sustainable economic growth. While national debates have moved on to acknowledge the benefits of green growth in securing future economic competitiveness and mainstreaming climate action into national policies, the perspective of co-benefits from green growth needs to be brought more prominently into the international climate negotiations as feasible way forward on combating climate change on a global scale. This can make a key contribution to improving understanding on the ways to limit negative effects for Africa and Europe alike and especially creating sustainable economic growth.