
SADC REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR ON CLIMATE AND WATER

SOMERSET WEST, 29 - 30 OCTOBER 2008

FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT



OPENING SESSION

Chairing the opening session was **Mr Pär Granstedt**, Secretary General of AWEPA. Presenters included Mr Barney Karuombe (SADC PF Secretariat), Hon David Dlali, Member of the South African Parliament and a message was screened from Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Mr **Pär Granstedt** welcomed all participants to the Regional Parliamentary Seminar on Climate and Water organised in cooperation with the Southern Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF). This seminar forms part of a series of events organised under the umbrella of the African European dialogue on Climate, Food Security and Development, launched by AWEPA in August 2008.

The dialogue is focussed on engaging African and European Members of Parliament in Climate and Food Security issue in the run up to the COP 15 meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen and beyond. In this respect, Parliamentarians have drafted a Parliamentary Action Plan that forms the leading thread in further consultations at the regional and national level in Africa.

This particular seminar will focus on three issues:

- The effects of Climate Change and its repercussions on Food Security in Africa
- The needs to find substitutes for fossil resources in Africa.
- The need to increase agricultural production and the consequences for water management

Mr Barney Karuombe (Regional Integration Officer) of the SADC-Parliamentary Forum spoke on the need for implementation of the SADC Protocol on Shared Water Courses. He stressed the need for parliamentarians to push this process.

Hon David Dlali, Member of the Parliament (MP) of South Africa highlighted a couple of dilemmas for South Africa's legislators such as the shortage of water and the land for food production vs. bio fuels. According to Hon Dlali, Africa is unrightfully blamed for its inaction regarding Climate Change. In his opinion, Africans can deal with this issue effectively. It is the role of parliamentarians to reach out to their constituencies that expect them to act.

SESSION I: AFRICAN UNION AND SADC PROTOCOLS ON CLIMATE AND WATER AND FOOD SECURITY

Hon David Dlali, MP South Africa continued by presiding the first session on international legislative frameworks on Climate and Water.

The presentations of **Ms Olushola Sodeko** (Senior Policy Officer Environment and Water) of the African Union and **Mr Nelson Gomonda** of WaterAid Southern Africa in this session focused on the extreme variations in weather patterns and changing ecosystems. It further maintained that the expected impacts of climate variability are likely to adversely affect the well-being of all countries, particularly the poorest countries in Africa. The impacts of climate change, will, according to the presentation, encompass the following:

- Droughts, floods and storms.
- Water stress, coastal erosion, higher incidence of vector borne disease among others.
- A decline in agricultural productivity and food security.

- Widespread incidences of water-related diseases, particularly in tropical areas, which have already had a telling effect on economic development.
- A focus on climate change is central to development and poverty reduction agenda.

In terms of water availability in Africa, the following was highlighted:

- Africa's water availability is about 5000m³ per capital per year. This is lower than most other regions of the world.
- Despite the uneven distribution of the available surface and underground waters, the continent has sufficient water to meet its basic development needs.

The actions on climate change incorporated the following:

- Regional Action Plans (RAPs) for the 5 regions – South, East, Central, West and North Africa.
- NEPAD Environmental Action Plan (EAP, July 2003).
- Programme of Action for the Implementation of African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction – 2006.
- African Union 8th Summit, January 2007 Decision and Declaration endorsed Climate for Development Programme in Africa (ClimDevAfrica).
- Extraordinary Summit, Sirte, Libya, February 2004 adopted the 'Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Sustainable and Integrated Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa'. This action aims to:
 - Strengthen existing River and Lake Basin Organisations and create new ones where they do not exist.
 - Encourage bilateral agreements between Member States for the sustainable and integrated management of transboundary waters.

The guidelines for establishing cooperative framework agreements incorporate the following initiatives:

- 'Guidelines for establishing cooperative framework agreements for the integrated management of transboundary basins'.
- Developed with support – NEPAD, UNEP and other Development Partners and endorsed by the 6th Ordinary Session of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW).

The 2008 African Union Summit – Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration on Water and Sanitation focused on the following:

- To increase efforts to implement past declarations related to water and sanitation.
- To raise the sanitation profile by addressing gaps identified in the 2008 Thekwini Ministerial Declaration on Sanitation in Africa adopted by AMCOW.
- To address issues on agricultural water use for food security as provided in the Ministerial Declaration.
- To provide input on the Declaration and outcomes of 1st African Water Week.
- To develop and update national water management policies, regulatory framework, national strategies and action plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) water and sanitation targets in 7 years.
- To create a conducive environment to enhance engagements of local authorities and the private sector.

In highlighting the trends towards the MDG water and sanitation targets in Africa by 2015, the following key facts, were provided:

- From 1980 to 2006, 245 million Africans gained access to drinking water but the African population without access to drinking water increased by 61 million to 341 million.
- From 1990 to 2006, 153 million Africans gained access to adequate sanitation but the African population without access to adequate sanitation increased by 153 million to 583 million.
- 26 of the 54 countries in Africa are on track to meet the MDG drinking water target, but only 8 countries in Africa are on track to meet the MDG sanitation target.

In terms of food security and the actions taken on ensuring food security in Africa, the presenter focused on the following:

- The agricultural sector in Africa makes an important contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), export earnings and employment, and the unchallenged prominence of the sector in the economies of most countries.
- Accelerating agricultural growth in African countries is crucial for achieving food security, reducing hunger and generating employment and trade.

With regard to the actions on food security, the following achievements were noted:

- The Extraordinary Summit, Sirte, Libya, February 2004 adopted the 'Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Sustainable and Integrated Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa'.
- The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) addresses issues of agricultural sector growth; rural development and food security, and promoting investment to increase areas under irrigation to 20 million hectares by 2015; and to improve efficiency of rain-fed agriculture.
- Overall, the number of countries that have reached or exceeded the 6% CAADP growth rate for agriculture has gone up from 5 to 11 since 2003.
- The current global high food price crisis threatens to reverse the gains made over the past 10 years.

In noting the way in which the MDG targets 1 and 7 (poverty alleviation, water and sanitation) in Africa by 2015 will be achieved, the presenter highlighted the following:

Water and climate change

- Implementation of some commitments already made by the major donor/partners for Africa such as the Department for International Development (DFID).
- The Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Netherlands.
- The European Union – Agenda for Action on MDGs.
- The multi-lateral organisations including the United Nations and the World Bank.

Food security

The African Union appreciated and welcomed the:

- Initiative of proposed EU food facility of 1 billion Euros to help farmers in developing countries.
- Timely initiative between European farmers and African farmers.

The AU urged the speedy disbursement of the funds in order to provide relief to those most at risk from hunger and malnutrition and to increase food production.

Hon Mr Mohlaloga, Chairperson of South African Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Land Affairs outlined the issue of food security is an important issue and heavily interlinked with Climate Change. In his view, agriculture is not only the victim of Climate Change, but also the culprit. Already at this stage, changes in the climate are affecting Africa and worse existing problems such as droughts.

The SADC region is very vulnerable to these new challenges, as some of the poorest countries of Africa lie in the region. The last two years the region has been marked by a growing food crisis and rising water constraints. Parliamentarians should push for the introduction of new crop technologies, better knowledge sharing, accessible credits for farmers and improvement/expansion of weather stations throughout Africa. Hon Mohlaloga called for increased accountability of governments on international climate agreements, budgetary allocations for adaptation measures and more parliamentary debate on Climate Change and Food Security.

Mr Tony Worthington, Former MP UK talked about parliamentarians as the missing link in the CAADP. There is no plan to involve parliamentarians on the national and local level on food security and Climate issues, whilst that is highly needed according to Mr Worthington. He talked about the need to domesticate Climate Change, meaning that the discussion about these issues needs to come down to the national and local levels. He explained how the Kenyan agricultural committee is embarking on a new project to involve constituencies in parliamentary work on Climate Change, water, agriculture and related issues. He pointed out that it is the role of MPs to accelerate change in this domain.

Finally, he underlined that the prosperity in Africa can only be raised through increases in the agricultural production. African governments should focus on this and embrace new agricultural research in the struggle against the effects of Climate Change.

During the discussion, it was stated that as parliaments are responsible for approving national budgets and therefore have a say in how state resources are allocated, Members of Parliament need to take the following action:

- Advocate for increase in government funding for research on and implementation of regional and/or countrywide, multi-disciplinary climate change adaptation studies.
- Ensure parliaments allocate more resources to public education and awareness at all level and integrate environmental education across government departments.
- Explore the use of innovative mechanisms to increase funding for adaptation at the national level and encourage greater funding flows from the international community for climate change adaptation in highly vulnerable member states.
- Encourage development partners to ensure that their development assistance does not create negative environmental impacts. In addition, development assistance programmes should be reformed to support mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and adaptation measures.
- Ensure that relevant regional and national institutions give regular progress report and updates (including statistics) on poverty and food security.
- Advocate for substantial government funding for education, development, access to capital and markets for food producers and infrastructure development, to build and strengthen the food production capacity of their citizenry.

SESSION II: CLIMATE CHANGE & TRANS-BOUNDARY WATER MANAGEMENT

Hon. Dr Guido Sigonda, MP Tanzania chaired this session.

Ms Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong (Advisor on Environment and Tourism) of the NEPAD Secretariat provided the audience with an overview of the NEPAD Environmental Action Plan. In recent years, NEPAD has put Climate Change in the centre of its environment policy. The Action Plan identifies six critical areas, one of which is Climate Change and trans-boundary resources management. The rationale behind the programme is to support knowledge-sharing, policy support and participation. Ms Lisinge-Fotabong stressed the need for mainstreaming Climate Change in all governmental policies, as this is lagging behind in all corners of the African continent.

Additionally, Ms. Lisinge-Fotabong talked about the international Climate Change negotiations. In the run-up for the COP 15 meeting of the UNFCCC, the NEPAD Secretariat and the African Union are training African negotiators for the discussions on the successor of the Kyoto protocol. A series of meetings will be held during which African position on the Copenhagen agenda will be established and agreed. She stressed that the African European Parliamentary Dialogue on Climate, Food Security and Development should be integrated into that process. She also urged Parliamentarians to make their voice heard in this negotiation process.

Prof Gerhard Erasmus of the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa spoke about water legislation. From a legal perspective, all international efforts to tackle Climate Change stumble on the block of national sovereignty that stands in the way of an effective solution. As an example, he mentioned the management of the Orange River between the several SADC countries. For a long time now, the region is in need of an instrument to deal with the joint management of this water resource. International multilateral agreements can deal with the issues at stake. However, it takes a long time until the agreements are adopted at the national level and implemented in the field,

Prof Erasmus underlined that Parliaments often lack resources to develop knowledge on the issues regulated by international agreements. In his view, capacity is build when we start doing things. A second problem is formed by executive regulations, because they do not pass the Parliament. Trans-boundary water management is regulated up to a high degree by these executive regulations, thus inhibiting transparent and effective water management.

Furthermore, he pleaded for out of the box thinking, beyond the traditional separation of powers paradigm, in order to tackle Climate Change and its effects on trans-boundary water resources. "Water should not be seen as an isolated issue, we need to build the Parliament's technical legal capacity across the board" according to Prof. Erasmus. Governments, Researchers and Parliamentarians need not reinvent the wheel. There is already capacity on the ground in Africa, but sharing that is key.

Dr Dean Nel of the World Wildlife Fund introduced the topic from an ecological perspective. He stressed the need to look at Climate Change by looking at the surrounding ecological and social system.

In the southern part of the SADC region, lots of investments have been made in economic activity especially in mining. The effects are varied including: issues with water quality, destruction of wetlands and ruined river beds. However, dams and deforestation activities have led to even greater problems with the ecosystem in the region. The effects are well known and include increased flash floods and extra droughts during summer, according to Mr Nel. As a result, the poor have become more vulnerable. In conclusion, he recommended politicians to focus on an inclusive and transparent debate. He urged that rural communities should participate in decision-making over their water resources.

During the **discussion**, participants questioned if oversight can be effectively exercised, when there are budgets to spend on Climate Change adaptation? Questions were also raised on whether the South African water policy is bringing the desired results.

In an answer, Prof. Erasmus pointed to the old colonial border agreement regarding the Orange River. Policy and legislation should resolve this border issue as soon as possible to avoid future water conflict, however so far no agreement is within sight.

SESSION III: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

This session was chaired by **Hon Richard Mwaia**, MP Namibia.

Dr Guy Preston (Chairperson/National Programme Leader) of the South African Working for Water Programme highlighted some of the attempts to water conservation in South Africa. He explained the link between Climate Change and the rapid increase of invasive species and their spread in the SADC region. Invasive species form a real problem for the South African economy and tourism, as animals in safari parks do not eat these rapidly spreading species. Secondly due to Climate Change, species also transform and develop larger roots which in turn lead to a higher rate of water transpiration. This effect has of course a dramatic impact on water resources. The Working for Water Programme focuses on removing invasive species, thereby creating jobs for the rural population (mainly women).

Ms Jane Olwoch (Lecturer on Climate Change and Adaptation) from the University of Pretoria continued on this topic by explaining that even minor increases in temperature caused by the CO₂ emission, already have large effects on diseases and invasive species. Adaptation is already taking place in Africa on the staunch of what we already know, according to Ms Olwoch. However, more research and tangible action is needed to adapt our technical and social processes, as adjustment can reduce the vulnerability of communities in Africa.

In fact, Ms Olwoch believes Africa has many ways of adapting to Climate Changes, for instance through changing the way in which food is produced: rain fed agriculture. A first step in arriving at this goal is to package the language of Climate Change. As the poor are hardest hit by these changes, we must seek the involvement of the rural population. A successful adaptation can only be achieved through cooperation with individuals such as farmers, as well as communities. Finally, Ms Olwoch pointed to the lack of information on the effects of Climate Change and the need to inform Parliamentarians and constituencies about the challenges ahead. She said that the University of Pretoria is contemplating to start an extensive research programme on adaptation measures.

WORKING GROUP I: NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ACTION PLANS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Chair of this working group was **the Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi, Hon Dr L.J. Chimango**. He was aided by **Mr Peter Johnston** (Researcher) of the Climate Systems Analysis Group University of Cape Town. The later held an interesting presentation on Climate Adaptation in Southern Africa, which can be viewed on AWEPA's website.

During the working group session, Parliamentarians split up in national working groups to examine policy and legislative initiatives in their respective countries. Please refer to the AWEPA website for the national action plans that were formulated by Members of Parliament.

WORKING GROUP II: REGIONAL PROPOSALS FOR ODA PRIORITISATION AND MONITORING

This group was chaired by Hon Jennifer Du Pont, MP Swaziland with Hon Prof. Ben Turok, MP South Africa, leading the discussion. The group made the following points regarding the way forward:

- There is a need to sensitise MPs to funds donated to respective countries for monitoring – amounts, objectives and conditions attached

- Parliaments must to work with civil society and visa versa so as to ensure and track funds donated meet the objectives
- There are African countries that depend on donor funding, to an extent that some 40% of the budgets is donor funding. It is therefore a challenge for such countries to be independent any time in the future
- African countries are not collecting taxes for their own use, which is also a challenge
- The group resolves that AWEPA should look into ways of assisting MPs with communication systems in Africa in order to facilitate communication among MPs in different countries.
- MPs should read documents from donor countries critically so that they can tell whether the partnerships or ownerships mentioned / purported by donor countries are actually in favour of the recipient countries
- The group is of the view that aid/donor funding addresses a lot of issues that deal with climate change and water management
- There are mutual benefits which need to be explored seriously so that the partnerships are more meaningful and not one sided.
- AWEPA is playing an important role in bringing African issued up in the agenda of the EU Parliaments

CLOSING SESSION

The Closing Session was chaired by **Mr Barney Karuombe** of the SADC-PF. Mr Karuombe stated if all the communiqués issued after regional meetings were translated into action, poverty would have been greatly reduced. He also stated that there is a need to develop mechanisms to track post conference activities and interventions.

Hon Dr L.J. Chimango, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Malawi started by quoting from the Framework for Parliamentary Action CAADP Nairobi, September 2007 that took over a year to adopt. "Upon return from this meeting interviews give with national media to inform the public about process". He stressed that it must not take another year to get implementation as people are living with the effects of climate change now, houses are on fire figuratively and literally and there is a need to prevent this. He explained that homes burnt down in this constituency as the first rains had not yet arrived. Climate change is real and Members of Parliament who represent the poorest of the poor need to do something. There have been many processes discussed but not implemented. The responsibility lies squarely with leadership in Parliament. Committees and Chairpersons need to show leadership but it also rests with individual Members. There is a need for action as lives are in danger. From here, stakeholder meeting should be convened to develop action plans which are then implemented. The Hon. Speaker concluded by thanking SADC-PF , AWEPA and all the resource people for the contributions. "We cannot afford failure, it is not an option, we must succeed".

Ms Jessica Longwe, AWEPA Director of Partner Relations explained that the this programme started at an international level, it has now moved to the SADC level and will then be take to the national level to domesticate the issues for specific countries. In addition, there is a need for each individual to start to take responsibility and action in their homes and then take action in the rest of their lives. There is a need for SADC to get started on these and set an example for the rest of the continent.

Ms Longwe thanked the SADC-PF leadership for its vision, the South African Parliament for being wonderful hosts and for the role they played in making this meeting a success and finally to all the participants for their time and valuable contributions.

Recommendations formulated by Parliamentarians:

- 1) The establishment of an inter-sectoral Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change – an institutionalised unit in each Parliament.
- 2) Devise a model set of laws for the region on Climate Change